



ON A SNOW-BOUND TRAIN



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# On a Snow-Bound Train.

## A WINTER'S TALE.

BY

JULIA MACNAIR WRIGHT,

AUTHOR OF "ADAM'S DAUGHTERS," "MR. GROSVENOR'S  
DAUGHTER," ETC.

For day by day we should be instant in doing God's  
errands as we move across the world.



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# ON A SNOW-BOUND TRAIN.

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## CHAPTER I.

THE snow was falling in large, slow flakes, and the skies were gray with the storm-promise, when the train pulled out of the little station lying under the shadow of a spur of the Cœur d'Alène Mountains. Thence the course lay along the Bitter Root River, crossing and recrossing the frozen stream. Some of the passengers, noting the wintry aspect of the landscape, began to regret a trip undertaken on the Northern Pacific in mid-December. But then this was not a pleasure trip. The few passengers were on their way of necessity; those who could defer a journey until a pleasanter season had remained at home. The employés said that they had not had so light a train for many months, and added grimly that no doubt it "was well, for ten to one they would get stuck."

This was Tuesday morning; the train had left Portland on Monday with fair prospects. In the course of the evening the conductor heard at a station of a great snowstorm raging to the

north and west and moving towards them. But then the storm might not cross the Rockies, the Cœur d'Alène Mountains, the Bitter Root Mountains, and all that gridiron of great uplands; the train might keep ahead of the storm, and lose it as it escaped along the Yellowstone to fairer weather. At all events, there was nothing to do for it but to take the train on, that was the conductor's business; so he kept his information to himself, and on through the dark night rolled the train in safety, its passengers comfortably asleep.

It was a small train—baggage car, express car, two "sleepers," the "Cadmus" and the "Europa," a common car, and a smoking car, and none of them half full. "Folks knew enough to stay at home such weather," said one brakeman to another, "if folks had a chance; some folks did n't;" and he beat his arms about his body to get up a circulation, and then the train moved out of the station where they had tarried a little, the Cœur d'Alène range being now left behind.

The passengers had their lunch-baskets, and there was the buffet. An awful secret was cherished by the porter and the buffet steward, namely, that by a mistake as they steamed out of Portland some of the provisions expected for the trip had been left behind. "We may do

until we get to Bismarck," said the steward to the porter.

"Unless we get stuck in the snow for a day or two," said the porter to the steward.

The passengers were not thinking of such calamities. They had their tea, coffee, or chocolate, their sandwiches, or something from their lunch-baskets. Then they dozed or read or looked out of the windows at the thickening snow. Where the winter mantle of the earth had become worn, rent, and stained, this new descent of lavish flakes was covering all with a purer ermine; the bushes and trees were no longer bare, along bench and twig lay wreaths of snow.

In one of the compartments of the "Cadmus" sat a lady and a very pretty sixteen-year-old girl. Opposite them, in a section alone, was another girl of the same age. Both these maidens wore a garb that suggested recently a dress of deeper mourning. As the lady and her young companion bent near together, looking at some fantastic snow-work in a ravine, "Mrs. Nugent," whispered the girl, "is n't that young lady opposite us terribly plain!"

"Do you think so?" said Mrs. Nugent. "She is certainly not beautiful, and never will be, but she has in her face great intelligence, strong sympathies, and firm principles, if I read faces

right. At forty, when many of her own age are fading and worn out, she will be a noble and attractive-looking woman. You remember Patience in 'Pilgrim's Progress' was commended because he 'took his good things last, and last must always have its time to come.' I think, as to looks, it is much better to have good looks at forty, for in youth, what with hope and health and merry hearts, there is always attractiveness enough. Youth is in itself beautiful. Suppose you take over this volume of Du Maurier's sketches, and make the girl's acquaintance. She looks a bit lonely, and we are likely to have a long journey; you might as well help to keep each other's courage up, Myrtle."

Myrtle Granger made friends easily; she took the little flat volume indicated by Mrs. Nugent, with her own alligator bag, and presently she and the "plain girl" were chatting joyfully. Myrtle found that her new acquaintance was Catharine Hayes, going back to her place in an Eastern college. She had gone to Olympia to spend the long vacation, and had been detained there by the illness of her aunt.

"But I had a tutor, and kept up with my classes, and I think I can pass the examinations and go on with the rest when the next semester opens, the last of January."

Presently Myrtle learned that Catharine was

an orphan, without brothers or sisters, but had been brought up by her grandmother, who had died a year and a half before. Here was a new bond of sympathy. Myrtle Granger was also on her way to school, and was an orphan without near relatives.

"I have been at Portland since July," said Myrtle. "Mrs. Nugent, that lady I am with, had to go there to help settle the affairs of a niece who had been left a widow, and Mr. Nugent, that lady's only son, is my guardian, and he is troubled with very strong principles about doing what is exactly right by me! He fancied that I was not well and was too nervous, so he sent me off to Portland with his mother for a change and a rest from school."

"I should think, though you had a lovely trip, you must have hated to lose that much school-time," said Catharine.

"I did. But being with Mrs. Nugent is a liberal education. She just fills you up with information without your knowing it. Besides, she lifts you up daily into something better, and you can't help finding, when you are with her, that you have grown and learned to estimate everything more as you should."

"I fancied that. I have been admiring her face all the morning. As for your guardian, I will not judge him to be an infant in arms, but

from her appearance he cannot be much over your own age. I supposed you were mother and daughter, and I envied you."

"Girls with mothers are to be envied, are they not! But I often think that if my dear mother could have foreseen how I should fall chiefly into Mrs. Nugent's hands, she would have been satisfied."

"Don't you suppose she knows now? If she does not, at least she knows that all is right, and that God has done better than she could ask or think."

"Yes, I'm sure of that. One of her favorite sayings was, 'It is always safe to trust Him.' She died suddenly, and the court appointed Mr. Nugent, her attorney, my guardian. When I fell into the family in that way Mrs. Nugent assumed the responsibility of me. I suppose she calls me one of the errands she does for God. As for my guardian, he is neither an infant nor of my own age; he is thirty. Mrs. Nugent is not very old, and she looks much younger than she is. I have heard people ask her how she keeps so young looking, and she says 'she has not had time to grow old, she has had so much work to do.'"

The two girls were now in a very confidential strain. They had looked over the book of Society Sketches and laughed and commented.



The alligator bag had yielded them up a box of chocolates, which they had disposed of with the hearty appetite of youth; they felt like old friends and were ready to exchange all their opinions.

"But most people say that work makes folks grow old and worn."

"It depends upon the kind of work, and the spirit in which it is done, does n't it? Mrs. Nugent's work is literary and philanthropic; it calls her out of herself to live and think for others. I suppose there are many days when she has no time to remember herself at all! She keeps in touch with all the best that is in the world, and full of sympathy for others."

"But is not sympathy itself exhausting?" said Catharine. "We can sorrow and be anxious and burdened for others, 'worn out with sympathizing,' I heard a lady say once."

"Well, does n't all that depend upon the spirit? Now I think Mrs. Nugent's *de Leon* fountain is found in her religion. She trusts God for the present and for the future. She never frets and worries over anything. I think, though she does not say much about it, that she takes all her affairs to God. Great troubles and little worries are all left with an 'Oh well, I must leave it with God;' 'I must ask God about that;' 'The Lord will see to that.' That is her

way of meeting and bearing things. I noticed it all through this trouble of establishing her niece and settling her affairs, and through all the sickness and anxiety, for there are several children and one was very ill. Every day she was just as calm and hopeful, sure that God would provide and open a way out."

"It is a beautiful spirit; but sometimes we can trust so much more easily for others than for ourselves!"

"It is so with her when her own personal matters are at stake. Last spring all her property and her son's seemed likely to be lost. Her son said, 'Mother, I'm desperately afraid all is going by the board.' She said quietly, 'God knows all about it. Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father.' She was just as calm as when all was safe again. There was a terrible accident too, and for a few hours we did not know but Mr. Nugent, her only child, to whom she is devoted, was in it. She was deadly pale, but all she said was, 'If this is God's way, we must walk in it.' I heard a friend of hers, a despondent kind of woman, suggesting a hundred dreadful things that might happen; and all she answered was, 'No good parent abandons his child half way in the journey. If I get where I cannot go on, my Father must take me up and carry me, and indeed he has promised that he

will.' What is this train stopping for? There is no station here."

"It is stopping on account of the snow, I think. See how heavily it is falling. I never saw anything like it. It shuts us in like a white cloud! There, we go on, but how slowly! Suppose we should be snow-bound here on the track for two or three days!"

"My! I hope not. I do so want to be at home for Christmas, and I know Mrs. Nugent does. She has never been away from her son at Christmas; and there is a new grandson there, and she is so devotedly attached to her grandchildren! If we are snow-bound for a few days, do you suppose we should have enough to eat, and light and fuel enough? What will our company be like? Do you know anything about them?"

"There are three young men in that first section; they spend most of their time in the agreeable odors of the smoking-car. This stout elderly gentleman in No. 4 does not look easy in his mind. He is at war with himself some way. He is healthy, and he is rich—his clothes, his gold-mounted satchel, and his diamond scarf-pin hint that. But he has something on his mind. I fancy, from his lip and chin, that he is a stubborn man, hard where he thinks he is right. Those two young girls are going to Boston Con-

servatory for vocal music. They are friends. The dark one has been there before. The fair one is a soprano. She too looks uneasy and troubled now and then. That boy and girl about our age are twins and they are going to New York to study art. They are going to Cooper Institute and to private studios. They have come from China, where their father is consul in some queerly-named place. Having grown up in China, I should think all their ideas of art would be distorted, especially their perspective."

The two girls laughed. "And you found all that out so soon, last night and this morning!" cried Myrtle.

"In the dressing-room, and stopping at the sections to exchange civilities—I am a thoroughly social animal. But that lady in black in No. 9 will not look at me. Poor soul! she seems to be shut in with sorrow. Yet she looks cross too, and rebellious, as if she did not feel satisfied with God's dealings. It throws a darkness over the whole car to look at her. Do you know, I think we have no right to look like that. We ought to brace up, and not burden with our gloom others, who may be burdened enough already. That lady some way reminds me of a little cousin of mine who has a most unfortunate disposition: if he cannot have what he wants or do what he wants—if his father declines to buy

him a new sled or says the ice is not thick enough for skating, or his mother considers the water too cold for swimming—he goes about the picture of gloom and injury; he cannot speak, he just sulks and pines, until all the house is dismal. If he is told to do work, which he never wants to do, he dares not disobey; but he pouts and glowers and sighs and groans until life near him is a weariness. God has some just such children in his family! There, your Mrs. Nugent has gone to see the ‘gloomy lady.’ What a contrast their faces are!”

“And in ten minutes,” laughed Myrtle, “she will know all the lady’s story. Not that she will ask a question. She has a peculiar horror of being inquisitive; but some way people cannot resist her, and the most reserved pour out their histories to her. What is told her is buried in her heart and has no resurrection; I think folks feel instinctively that she is *safe*. If we are snowed in here, she will be the chief friend and helper of everybody, she will know every one’s story. There, we are stopped again! O porter! are we going to be snowed in?”

“Looks mighty like it, miss. But maybe not.”

Thus the morning passed, now the train running with more speed where the wind had swept the track clear, now coming to a full stop

before a drift; and all the time the storm increased and the drifts were heavier. At noon people lunched and took courage, then some napped; the dark skies grew darker, the faces of conductor and train-hands more gloomy and anxious. Mrs. Nugent had made calls on the artistic twins and on the musical young ladies; books and papers were dropped, travellers became anxious and fretful. Mrs. Nugent got out a box of letters and arranged a game for Myrtle, Catharine, and the twins.

"I told you so," whispered Myrtle to Catharine; "there is the conductor taking Mrs. Nugent into his confidence. I am sure now that things are going badly, and we shall be on the road over Christmas!"

"Does he expect her to bewitch the train, and make it fly on in spite of the snow?" said Catharine.

"He wants her to be the general keeper-up of courage, and you will see she can, because her own courage is hourly renewed. One of her sayings is that all God expects of her is to live by the minute, and he always holds the next one in his hands. If we are snow-bound, she'll find an errand for God to every man, woman, and child on this train."

"My grandmother used to say," replied Catharine, "that when people did their errands for

God well, he always gave them plenty of errands to do."

"Is your game through?" said Mrs. Nugent, crossing over to their section. "There is a large drift ahead and we shall be some hours in getting through with it. We are now to make the waiting pleasant. Our sleeper, the 'Cadmus,' proposes to give an Afternoon Tea to the people on the 'Europa.' Master James Martin, if you will kindly copy this invitation in your largest, handsomest script, and ornament it with sundry sketches of tea-chests, teacups, teapots, and so on, that will be your part: and if you three girls will come with me to the baggage-car, I will assign you your parts."

Three very merry girls followed the lady to the baggage-car, where already Mrs. Nugent's largest trunk had been pulled forward. From the trunk Mrs. Nugent took three Chinese costumes, a dozen and a half of precious cups and saucers, each of which had been beautifully packed in a little box, a package of choice tea, and two small brass tea-kettles of enticing shape—Christmas presents designed for home friends.

Returned to the "Cadmus," the girls retired to the dressing-room to appear as Chinese tea-girls, under the supervision of Miss Martin: the porter improvised a table, the steward brought loaf sugar, Albert biscuit and wafers, napkins

and plates. James Martin carried the invitation through the "Europa;" the steward pledged himself to unlimited water exactly at the boiling point, cream was produced, and sliced lemons for those who wanted Russian lemon tea, and soon a cheerful group of the passengers from both sleepers gathered at the Afternoon Tea.

The day closed, the lights were lit, the train still stuck in the drift, where vigorous arms were at work faithfully doing their best.

"Keep them up," whispered the conductor to Mrs. Nugent. "It is too soon for them to begin to worry; we are in for a siege of it."

Mrs. Nugent urged the musical ladies to sing. Like all musical ladies they hesitated.

"Do, please," said Mrs. Nugent, "and Master Martin and his sister will sing us a Chinese song."

"And you, Mrs. Nugent, will give us a story!" cried Myrtle.

"Do, please promise," said Catharine. "Myrtle says you tell lovely stories, and it will pass the time so nicely."

"Have it a story of warm weather, of sunny lands, so that we shall forget this terrible snow-drift," said the soprano.

"You know there is a manuscript story in your satchel," entreated Myrtle; "let us have that before it sees print."



"Do, and we will sing," said the contralto; "and if we are kept on the road in this way, we will all do our part to-morrow. There is Mr. Glass; he is a splendid reader and recitationist. You will help us out to-morrow, wont you, Mr. Glass?"

"Indeed I will. I will read you the most appropriate thing in the world, "Snow-Bound."

"Let us have the music," said Mrs. Nugent, "and then I will read you my story. It is a simple religious story of Italy and of summer and of humble people."

"Is it one of your experiences, Mrs. Nugent, in your travels over the world?" cried Myrtle.

"No, this is the experience of a friend, who was like the half of my life, and who has gone to 'the Land which lies very far off.' She was the New Madonna of my story, and this story is of one of the little errands she did for God. It is called, 'At a Tuscan Shrine.' "

When the singing was ended, and the applause also, James Martin found a lamp to place near Mrs. Nugent, and she read her story.

#### AT A TUSCAN SHRINE.\*

On the crest of the hill hedge-rows of vines made way for a shrine. On every side the gray-

\* Reprinted from the "New York Observer" by consent.

green olives clad the slopes or alternated with vineyards, and far down in the valley lay the Flower of Cities. The Campanile and the Duomo shone in the sunset; the silver ribbon of the Arno was barred by the black spans of the bridges, and here and there a boat with a triangular yellow sail drifted in the distance like a toy.

It was not the view but the shrine that Monna Marta sought. She dropped upon the step with a sigh, and interrogated with a look of despair the carved Virgin under the canopy.

A nobly made woman, with a fine face that might have been moulded in bronze, a deathless sorrow in her eyes and limned in deep lines where smiles should have played—this was Monna Marta. In her coarse blue gown, a white kerchief over her head and cow-skin sandals on her feet, Marta closely resembled the Virgin whose shrine she had sought—the Madonna of the Poor they named her, and by some happy inspiration the artist had carved her after one of his own people, made her a middle-aged contadina, not a queen. The likeness was further strengthened by the child. Marta carried Angiolino, her youngest, a brown, curly, dimpled creature, who hung over her shoulder and laughed at the Gesù bèbè and played bo-peep with him. Angiolino had no playmates, and

his joyous heart rebelled at the sorrow that hung, cloud-like, over his home. He regarded the Gesù baby as a real child, and loved him with enthusiasm.

Perhaps Padre Gerolamo saw this singular likeness between worshipper and worshipped, as he came, breviary in hand, out of the *viale*. He seated himself at the foot of the shrine, and he also interrogated his divinity with a look of despair. Then, "Here again, Marta?"

"It is the shrine I like best, padre, and then Angiolino keeps quieter here; he likes the Holy Babe, and I like this adorable mother. She looks poor—like one of the people: she is elderly, she has had experiences, as I have; she has suffered. These laughing young girl-mothers in the churches—pardon me, padre—do not look as if they can feel for me. But this one—do you think by any chance she ever quarrelled with St. Joseph or was sharp to her holy Son, padre?"

"God forbid!" said Padre Gerolamo, but he smiled to himself, his parishioner was so thoroughly realistic.

"Padre, I have prayed till I think Saints and Virgin are weary of me. I have worn out my knees and my rosary, yet I get no answer. Evidently I am not heard."

"And what answer do you expect, *figlia*?"

"That my banished may return to me!" cried Marta, stretching out her arms with a fine action full of majestic grace.

The padre shook his head. "Sin must be punished, figlia."

"Is there no forgiveness of sin anywhere?"

"There is—penance, satisfaction, good works."

"I have done all the penances I know. Good works? I cannot do them; I have Angiolino and Nanna to care for, the vines and the olives to see to. Satisfaction? If I were the king I could give Italy for the sin of my soul. This is not what I want. Is there not in earth or heaven free forgiveness for one poor and sorry like me?"

"Not any that I know of," said Padre Gerolamo.

"Have you searched all through what Holy Church says? Forgive me, padre, but perhaps the matter has not pressed on you as on me. You serve at the altar. You are holy. Probably you have never sinned."

"Yes, figlia, I have sinned damnably!" cried the padre, with a burst of confidence that surprised himself. But Marta's cry for forgiveness echoed an unappeasable cry in his own soul; he was a lonely man, and this "sorrow-bound mother" had eyes such as his own mother's had been. His confession startled Marta.

“Ah! Before you were a priest of course, padre. And then you have consolation; your heart is set on the church, mine is set on my family. And my case is so hard! Nita was my pride, and she fell in with evangelicals and cast off the true faith. What could I do? I said to Nita, ‘Give up evangelism or leave my house.’ I thought that would settle it with Nita. It did, but not in my way—Nita went. Then Sandro, my oldest, my brave Roman, rose up and said, ‘My sister is pretty and young; she shall not go alone into the world,’ and Sandro went with Nita to the land beyond seas. Then Pasquale, my husband, sickened in his heart, and could neither eat nor sleep, and all his word was, ‘I pine for my children.’ I was not enough for Pasquale; home was not enough; the old faith was not enough; he longed for his children, he said I had been cruel. Then Pasquale, too, began to seek for comfort with the evangelicals.”

“Heresy is a great sin,” said the padre, “but as a wife and a mother you might have served God better by kindness than by harshness, Marta.”

“I am a Roman,” said Marta proudly. “I was born in the Trastevere, I took my religion from the holy Pontiff and the noble city of Rome. I came with Pasquale to Tuscany; but

it is hard for a Roman to be soft and yielding as a Tuscan. But, yes, padre, I sinned. I gave Pasquale no peace. My heart was like ice to Nita and Sandro. When Pasquale could no longer endure, and the olives and the wine were sold, he left upon the table a little pile of francs and this word: 'I go to seek my children,' and he rose up and went away in the night. I awoke, alone with Angiolino and the cripple, Nanna. Then, padre, I saw that I had been wrong. I too grew sick for my exiles. But I could not go forth; I was held by the little, weak ones. These two years I have prayed and watched and repented; but hope is dead and sin is unforgiven and my banished come no more!"

"Figlia, I too have waited and repented fifteen years. My young brother, joy of my life, half of my heart, my only blood, left me because through greed and ambition I wronged and deceived him. I thought he would never know. He knew, he left me in scorn. He too sought the land beyond seas. What would I not give to take his hand and say, 'I have sinned against heaven and against thee!' But, figlia, I find that though when Paradise is reached sin may somehow be forgiven, God grants no pardons here. The cry is still, Atone, atone, atone

Out of the *viale* came a woman. Dressed in blue, with a white Genoese mantle wrapped

about her, a face serene under the dark hair parted on her brow, she seemed to Marta an ideal Holy Mother, not so young and gleesome as the one over the altar, not so worn and sad as the Madonna of the Poor. She, too, sat on the step of the shrine, and in Tuscan that halted a little, with foreign accent, said, "Amici, in the midst of sunshine and beauty you speak of sorrow."

"We sorrow," said Marta, "because there is so much sin, and in this world no forgiveness for sin."

"There is forgiveness with God," said the New Madonna. "It is written, 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.'"

"That must mean for great saints or very little sins," said Marta.

"It is meant for sinners and great sins," said the New Madonna. "The true strength of prayer is not our deserving, but our undeserving. It is written in the Psalm, 'Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.' When we go to God for forgiveness we are limited only by his limitless grace in Christ. If we asked for the sake of our deserving, we should be limited by our small desert. Is not this so, padre?"

"The words are truly in the Psalter," said the padre.

"At the end," said Monna Marta, "God may

forgive us, and take us to glory if we are very good. What we need is peace now."

"Monna and padre," said the New Madonna, "here at this shrine you sit and mourn for sin. Let me show you the riches of forgiveness that are in Christ, the Holy One, on whom the love of the Eternal Father rests. When we go to God in Christ's name, casting ourselves on him, he covers us with his robe, hides us with his person, shows his face to God for us. God sees not us, but his Beloved Son. For his sake he freely pardons all our sin. He pardons us so fully that he esteems us complete in Christ, and beholds us as blameless, without spot or wrinkle. He pardons us so fully that he says our 'sins and iniquities he will remember no more,' and 'our sins which we have committed shall not be so much as mentioned.' How can they be mentioned if they are forgotten? He will never forget us, but he will forget our sins. Amici! How very far distant is that wilderness of the forgetfulness of God where he puts all our sins behind his back for ever! There is only one thing in the universe that God can forget—that is the sin of his children. Padre, is it not written in the Old Testament that on the Day of Atonement two goats were taken to represent the work of Christ? One was slain, to show Christ dying for our sins; over the head



of the other the priest confessed all sin, and then the goat, with all the sin on its head, was led into the wilderness and seen no more. 'This, amici, was to show that for the sake of Christ's shed blood our sins are carried into the great wilderness of God's forgetting and appear against us no more.'

"Padre," said Marta, "can such wonderful words be true?"

Padre Gerolamo said not a word. Light had shone upon his agonizing soul; he rose in haste to go to the sacristy, to search an old Bible there, whether these things were true.

"If you are Monna Marta," said the New Madonna, "I have just come from your home. I must spend some weeks among these hills, and I wish to live at your house."

Monna Marta rose in silence. Her soul was subdued with a great wonder and a great hope. The laughing Angiolino kissed his dimpled hand to the Gesù baby, but in her heart his mother prostrated herself and kissed pierced feet that had ascended up on high and led captivity captive and given gifts unto men.

Day after day the New Madonna abode in the house of Marta. Under her happy smile Angiolino bloomed and expanded like a flower, and grew daily more like his friend the Gesù baby. Nanna, the cripple, given more skilled

care, turned from the "downward way to death" which she had travelled. Most of all, Monna Marta rose to newness of life, hearing the wonderful evangel of forgiven sin. She did not fear it as heresy. Why should she? As it poured from the lips of the New Madonna, her priest, Gerolamo, drank it in, and testified, "It is written."

But Monna Marta and her padre equally longed for a sign. If their sins against the absent were forgiven, if forgiveness were so free, why did not their banished return?

"You have not asked it of God," said the New Madonna.

"Not asked! Oh, Madonna, we have asked a million times!"

"In your own names. Get behind Christ and ask in his name. He says, 'If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it.' 'The Father himself loveth you.' O amici! all you have to do is to hide behind the crucified Christ. Say to God, 'Not for us, but for him, for his sake,' because he died to give this benediction. This also is of the purchase of the Son. 'Will he not with him freely give us all things?' Padre, is it not so written?"

Then on the steps of the Tuscan shrine Padre Gerolamo laid aside his book, and rising up poured out his heart to God in the name of

Christ. "Send back our exiles, merciful Father, Marta's and mine. Let the divine forgiveness be sealed in the human forgiveness. Let us have this petition in the name of the interceding Christ, who died for us."

\* \* \* \* \*

And the grapes about the Tuscan shrine ripened, and the olives were gathered, and the yellow maize was harvested, and Angiolino brought chestnuts and pomegranates to show to his friend the laughing Gesù baby; and Padre Gerolamo and Marta and the New Madonna waited. They waited.

\* \* \* \* \*

Up the Tuscan hills they came from the land beyond seas, coming with joyous hearts and full hands up the sunny slopes, and found them waiting in the sunset at the shrine. They came—Nita in her serene young womanhood, and Sandro with his Roman mother's face, and Pasquale with his big soft brown eyes and Tuscan tongue—came to fold Monna Marta with great love to their hearts, and suffer not one word of penitence to be said, as they sealed with kisses the lips of the Roman mother.

They did not come alone; the famous physician, their countryman, whom they had met in the land beyond seas, whose heart they had stirred when they spoke of their sad-voiced

Padre Gerolamo, had come with them—the beloved, wronged, exiled brother.

Then when with Italian fervor these two men had embraced each other, “I robbed you!” cried Gerolamo.

“It is all forgotten,” said Piero.

“Forgive me, my brother!”

“I remember nothing to forgive. I remember only the tie of our blood, and that we are one mother’s sons.”

“Ah,” cried the padre, “how freely and largely does God pardon sin!”

“See,” said Marta, “how wonderfully he gives us gifts, asked in the name of Christ.”

“My mother,” said Nita, “the doctor, Piero, says that he can cure our Nanna, so she will be strong and walk once more.”

“My mother,” said Sandro, “hereafter our home and the olives and the vines are all our own.”

“My Marta,” said Pasquale, “it seems to me that we and our padre are all evangelicals.”

“This,” said the New Madonna, “is the evangel, God has for us infinite riches in Christ.”

## CHAPTER II.

There was a silence in the "Cadmus" when Mrs. Nugent had finished reading. These were great themes that had been broached, and they could not easily be set aside.

Presently the conductor came through the car.

"How are we coming on? When will we start? What about the drift?" cried the anxious passengers.

"The men are working finely, and I think we shall get the better of this drift before long. After this we may find the track pretty free and make fair time. But here on these northwest highlands, in a blizzard, one never knows what will happen, and I want to be ready for the worst and then find the best. I want to save oil and fuel, and lighten the train if I can. If the 'Europa's' passengers can come here in the 'Cadmus,' that will be a great help. I think it could be done, if the two or three who have whole sections would share them."

"Any gentleman from the 'Europa' is welcome to the upper berth in my section," said the stout gentlemen, whom Catharine Hayes had summed up as sick and unhappy.

The conductor with an earnest "thank you" looked towards the sad-faced lady in mourning. She bowed assent. He turned towards Catharine. "I will give up the top berth," she said. It was a sacrifice: she had been so particular to have a whole section, and enjoyed it so much. However, she could not refuse to yield it. There was a plain, elderly, very discouraged and lonely looking woman among the "Europa's" people. The conductor led her towards Catharine's section, saying, "I will bring your luggage here at once."

Catharine felt disappointed. This was not an attractive fellow-traveller. But she was elderly and uncomfortable. Well, Catharine must do her best. "I said you could have the upper berth," she remarked, "but I suspect the lower one would suit you better, and I can get into the upper one more easily. It is not long since I was climbing trees!"

The stranger said, "Thank you," and tried to smile.

"We may be partners in this section ever so long," continued Catharine, resolute to do her best. "We might as well know each other's names: I am Catharine Hayes."

"My name is Mary Matlack."

"Does it trouble you to ride backwards? It does not hurt me at all. When we start, I'll

change seats with you, if you like." And then Catharine thought what nice times she had expected to have discussing college and vacation life with Myrtle. Still she could cross over to Myrtle's section. Yes; but why should she? She and Myrtle had no secrets to confide; perhaps their merry chat would beguile this depressed Miss Matlack. "Myrtle, come over here and get acquainted," she said.

The conductor had filled up the three vacant sections and introduced a young commercial traveller to the occupant of No. 4. The "Europa's" passengers were now all provided for, and the "Cadmus" was about full.

"I thank you all, ladies and gentlemen," said the conductor, "for your very kind conduct. I hope when we are through this drift soon to reach a switch, where I can side-track the 'Europa' and the common car, and so lighten the train, as well as save fuel and oil."

Then he turned to Mrs. Nugent: "In the common car there are three men who will be quite willing to travel in the smoking car. There are two little girls of five and seven, poor little mites! just left orphans, and going to find an aunt, who ten to one will not want them. And there are two young Italian girls and their brother—very clean, pretty young folks; I wish you would come and speak to them if you know

Italian. They don't speak very plain English, and I don't know where to put them."

"Put them in the state-room; that is still vacant, and will hold a family party," said Mrs. Nugent. "They will surely enjoy travelling in such style as that; and they will be as apart from the other passengers as ever, and no one can complain."

"I believe I will," said the conductor. "Here, porter, unlock that state-room and make it up. And you'll come and speak to them, madam? There is also a little Irish girl of ten or so, going to New York; she seems to have taken to the Italians."

"There will be room there for her too," said Mrs. Nugent, rising to go to the common car with the conductor.

"Myrtle," said Catharine, "let us see how many different figures we can make out on these frosted window-panes!"

The discouraged Miss Matlack looked interested; she had never heard of finding pictures on window-panes.

In the common car Mrs. Nugent found the two Italian girls crying, and their young brother looking on in a state of great gloom. They were in their Italian dresses, and not well enough wrapped for the weather; very clean, bright, pretty young folks, the boy with a



harp, one girl with a violin, and one with an accordion.

"Sta freddo, Signorina," said Mrs. Nugent, smiling, and in response there was a voluble burst of Italian, winding up with a declaration that it was well they did not carry a monkey, or the poor beast would surely freeze.

"Do not fear," said Mrs. Nugent; "we shall soon go on our way; meanwhile this kind conductor is going to give you a beautiful room in the car with other people. This little girl who says her name is Nora can go with you. You will be much warmer there. Do not cry, my children."

"We shall be out of food," said the lad; "ours is nearly gone."

"Never mind; we will find you something to eat."

"But Signora mia," cried the eldest girl, "that is not the worst of it. We have been three years in this country. We came to earn money to buy our little farm and our vineyard. It is earned. We are going home to rejoice our old father and mother and the little brothers. Our tickets are bought and paid for through our uncle in New York, who also goes; and now we shall miss our ship and lose our money, and that we cannot afford! It is great loss!"

"Never fear; the steamship company will

understand, and give you a passage on the next ship."

"But we are only poor foreigners, and do not speak well; if we were rich English, they would heed us; but now no, they will not believe, and we shall lose our tickets."

"Do not fear. Some one will help you. I have friends in New York who will explain to the company for you. Gather up your things and come to the other car, and do not cry any more. The good God is over all; he will remember you."

"Here are those poor children," said the conductor, pointing out two pretty little girls, asleep, leaning against each other. "The ladies of the Christian Association put them in our charge, to pass on to Cleveland to an aunt. They lost both parents last month. They are sweet little creatures. If I were not a widower, I declare I would adopt them. No doubt their aunt has ten of her own, and will hate to see these two more claimants for bread and butter. Well, we must wake them up."

"Let me rouse them and take them to share Miss Lossings' No. 9," said Mrs. Nugent. "Who knows? she is rich and lonely, and grieving because she has lost her sister and has not a near relative left. God setteth the solitary in families; who knows what may happen?" She woke

up the children, who patiently took her hand, and with stumbling feet and eyes heavy with sleep were led into Cadmus No. 9.

"Here are two of God's sparrows for your tending," said Mrs. Nugent to Miss Lossing, and she told her their little story. "We will ask the porter to make the upper berth ready, and I will help you undress them. Here is their bag with all their little raiment, neat and clean, in it."

When the children were in bed, and Miss Lossing had shut herself and her sorrows into her lower berth, Mrs. Nugent returned to the front seat in the car while her own section was being made ready for the night. The stout gentleman of No. 4 was sitting there alone.

When Mrs. Nugent took a seat near by, he said to her in a low tone, "Are you sure that is truth which you read about the full, entire, free forgiveness of God?"

"Certainly; we have Scripture for it."

"It is very different from man's forgiveness."

"True. Man makes a practice of falling short of the divine pattern. And yet we are told to forgive utterly, and to expect the like from God."

The gentleman sighed. "Your story stirred up in my heart many thoughts which are never quite at rest. We are not likely to meet again, and you will not know who I am. I feel im-

pelled to tell you of a part of my life. I have carved my own way in the world and have made plenty of money. I have only one child, a son. It is hard for rich men's sons to come up to be diligent and economical. I meant that my son should do so. I put him in my business on the same footing as other clerks, and I expected him to provide for himself, with no earnings greater than the rest, except that he had his home free with me, and that was a good deal after all. I believe in young folks making their own way up, on narrow means, and I do not believe in early marriages; and I expected when my son was old enough to marry, say at thirty, to have him marry the daughter of my late partner, whose fortune was still in the business. Then I meant to take my son for a partner. I had a right to make these plans for his good. Instead of taking my way, my son, at twenty-one, when his salary was five hundred a year, married a girl whom I had never seen. He married her unexpectedly to us and to himself. They were engaged, and the mother, the girl's only relative, was taken suddenly ill; the doctor said she had but a few hours to live, and Ben, to make her mind easy about her girl, went after a parson and they were married on the spot. The girl was poor; she and her mother had lived on a little annuity and a few music scholars. I was

very angry, and I had a right to be. I forbade Ben to bring his wife home. He said he could not live on five hundred and board himself and wife. I thought he should have considered that before he married in haste. I wouldn't increase his salary, and in a few months a cousin of my wife, living in Chicago, offered Ben a place with him at twelve hundred. Ben took it. I needed him; he had no right to leave me. I refused to bid him good-by. We parted in silence. I am sure Ben felt pretty bad about it. I know I did."

"Well?" said Mrs. Nugent, in her low, sympathetic tone.

"Well! The boy had a mother; that was well for him. I would not give my wife a penny for Ben, but these mothers, if they have grit, get their way. My wife I suppose sold her jewels, and bought and furnished a snug little home for her children. At least I find Ben owns such a home, and my wife from that day wears no jewel, except a plain schoolgirl's watch and her wedding-ring—worn pretty thin, that—I was poor when I bought it." And he laughed ruefully.

"Well?" again from Mrs. Nugent.

"Well, Ben has two little girls and a boy. I have never seen them. My wife sets their pictures about the house; I never look at them—

when any one sees me. They are stunning little beauties. So is their mother. Her picture is in my wife's room ; I have never seemed to see it. My wife visits them twice a year. She always spends Christmas with them. She is there now. She makes the children's clothes and sends them presents, and I never admit that I know it. But all the same I long after them, and wont say so ! I thought this afternoon, as I saw those two lively, sweet girls chatting together opposite me, that my granddaughters would grow up and be like that, and I might never see them !”

Mrs. Nugent looked frankly at her interlocutor. “I see in your face,” she said, “great capacity for family affection, and—great capacity for stubbornness ! That latter quality has no doubt served you in good stead in your business, but does not come in so well in family life. What happiness is now before you if you forgive, forgettingly, bountifully, as God does, and load your children with benefits ! If your noble wife should die, how you would regret that you had put her to the pain of divided affections, conflicting duties, and family strife ! If your son should die, all your heart would cry out hopelessly after him, for one word, one look, one touch of that rejected hand. If those dear little children were taken away, then all the father-

hood in your nature would bewail for them. And they are in Chicago, and you meant to pass through the city and not see them? How much better to occupy the stop in Omaha in loading yourself with gifts, and going to them as the large-hearted father, the bountiful grandfather! Why not go and tell them how you have loved and missed them, how mistaken you have been in withdrawing from them? Do I make it seem as if you are the offender? Well, that is the side you must look on for yourself, and they must search out their errors for themselves. The way of the cross will be the way of peace for you all. Oh surely you will emulate God's forgiving! You will not wait until it is too late for love and peace!"

The sad, hard face was melting and changing. "Let me have that manuscript to read and think of again," he said. "It is God's message to me. I have had my religious side in spite of my hardness. Yes, I *will* stop at Chicago!"

Mrs. Nugent handed him the packet of manuscript and went to her own section with Myrtle.

After a while there was a thumping, jarring, bouncing through the cars. The train was moving! People slept. Then there was much more jerking and thumping. The conductor passed through the Cadmus.

"Holloa, conductor, what's up?" cried Mr. Glass.

"Very good news!" said the conductor. "We are through our drift, and have run to the switch, and found it blown free of snow; and we have side-tracked the Europa and the common car, and are going on."

"How is the storm?"

The conductor did not seem to hear. In truth the storm was worse than ever. Everybody, cradled by good hopes, went to sleep. All slept late: light struggled into the car late. It was nine before any one was stirring. Waking, the passengers found the engine's nose stuck hopelessly into an enormous drift, the engine fires out, and no prospect but indefinite delay, with very little to eat.

Mr. Brandt, the stout gentleman of No. 4, woke first with the happy heart of a sinner returned from the error of his ways. He visited the smoking-car to interview the train-hands and the men from the common car who had helped in a toilsome night. All were nearly exhausted. He went back to the buffet and ordered for them unlimited coffee, and that from the express car should be brought a venison that belonged to him, and cooked for the workers.

"If there's any left, steward, serve it out in the Cadmus, but feed those men well first."



After the travellers had adjusted themselves to the prospect of a snow-siege, the Cadmus had been set in order and breakfast served, one of the young men who shared Section 1 with Mr. Glass came to Mrs. Nugent. "My name is Frederick Marshall," he said, "and I am a member of the Young Men's Christian Association. I have a favor to ask of you."

"I am sure I shall be glad to grant it," said Mrs. Nugent.

"We have prepared a programme for a morning entertainment. Mr. Glass will read 'Snow-Bound'; I will recite 'The Swan Song of Parson Avery'; young Martin and his sister will get some Chinese costumes out of their luggage and will give in Chinese with pantomime a domestic dialogue. Do you remember, Mrs. Nugent, that two years ago in Boston you helped a branch of the Young Men's Christian Association in giving an entertainment in behalf of a charitable undertaking?"

"Yes; I think I do.

"Your part was, as a *raconteur*, to give a story. Your story was of a tempted, tortured, yielding, and finally victorious soul. As you gave it, that simple story seemed to be one of the most impressive things I had ever heard. My mother was with me, and she felt the same about it. There is here on this car a tempted, troubled,

yielding soul. I hope your story may brace it to conquest over temptation. That brunette young lady, the contralto singer, is preparing for the stage. She has sung some in opera; all her people are in that profession. But the trouble is that she has completely carried away that young soprano singer in a passion for stage-life. It is not only that she has no real gifts for the stage, and will have the heartbreak of loss and failure, but her family are plain religious people who will be most deeply distressed if she takes this step. She is deceiving them, for they have given her the means for additional vocal training to prepare her better to go on as a teacher of vocal music, and she means instead to train for the stage and not return home. She knows this is wrong; she has been religiously brought up, and her conscience troubles her about this plan to deceive and disappoint her parents. It seems to me it needs just some little influence in the right way to make her repent her present plan and take the course arranged for her by her parents. I know both of these girls; they are nice girls, and I want to save this one from a terrible mistake. Will you consent to give us that story of a 'Glittering Bawble' when I call for it?"

"Yes, I will," said Mrs. Nugent; "it may be another errand done for God."

Mr. Marshall and Mr. Glass arranged their

morning entertainment, invited the Italians to set open their state-room door, and the men from the other car and the idle train-hands to fill up all the vacant standing space, and the programme was carried out. Mr. Glass read "Snow-Bound," grandly, "The Swan Song of Parson Avery" brought tears to many eyes, and the Chinese pantomime of the Martins created much laughter. Mrs. Nugent saw a pale smile like misty moonlight drift over Miss Lossing's sad face as she sat with a pretty little orphan on each side her, the little ones easily pleased by what passed. Then, called upon by Mr. Marshall, Mrs. Nugent gave her story of—

#### A GLITTERING BAWBLE.

The sunshine fell broadly over a clean, bare floor, where a year-old child sat playing. The child had for toys a red spool, a blue tin cup, and a small yellow gourd. "New to earth and sky," rejoicing in the fresh power to move and control her active limbs, she regarded these three objects as treasures untold, constantly changed their position relative to each other, and hailed each new combination with a bubble of laughter. Near the child sat her mother, a brakeman's wife: she also had three toys—they were a girl of six, a letter, a ring. The girl she esteemed a nice child; the letter she could not

read; the ring was a glorious bawble, set with shining white stones: it caught the sunlight and blazed like a little constellation; it seized and divided and reflected the light until it fell as a shower of iris-hued spots on the white floor, and the child tried to grasp them with a crow of glee. The brakeman's wife thought the ring could not be worth less than a million of dollars, or at least ten thousand. She was unused to sums larger than five dollars, and to her a million and ten thousand were nearly the same amount. The mother combined and re-combined the child, the letter, and the ring, as the babe on the floor combined and re-combined the spool, the cup, and the gourd. Here on these shores of time we are all as children playing with gourds: from investing our souls in these fleeting things may the good God deliver us! This woman was a large, slowly-moving, fair-skinned creature, with pale eyes, reddish hair, a retreating chin, a wavering uncertain glance and smile. She was weak, and with the obstinacy of weak minds; sluggish in all her emotions but the newly aroused passion of maternity, her love for the child on the floor was as madness. She regarded this plump and homely likeness of herself as a cherub of dazzling beauty; she made the little creature an idol, under the wheels of whose chariot she might

willingly fall' and be ground to powder! The child was in all her thoughts.

The little one on the floor, resting on her knees and left hand, placed the cup beside the spool, the gourd beside the cup; this was satisfactory until she made the spool the central figure of the three, which was more satisfactory. The mother organized her toys. "I will keep the child Letty; why not? I love children. I will be good to her; she will be a nice playmate for the baby." "I will save the ring in my trunk." "I will burn up the letter." "Some day no doubt, I will give Letty the ring.

If there had been a fire in the room she would probably have burned the letter then and there. But it was warm weather and she had frugally let the fire go out. She knew in her soul that she would keep the ring not for Letty but for her own baby. What a fortune for baby as a bride that ring would be! or, with the price of the ring, baby could become a grand young lady with a silk gown and a piano! Again she made a fresh combination: this letter should be mailed at once; the relatives of Letty should come for her; the ring she would save for a time—but then, perhaps the ring was mentioned in the letter! She could deny having seen it, but search would be made possibly. Could she endure disgrace—the baby's mother?

Had she not always claimed to be a good woman—as good as any of her neighbors? Had she not told the minister that she was as good as anybody, and God had nothing against her, and she expected to get to heaven as a good, moral person? Now she was planning to rob Letty's grandfather of Letty, and Letty of her ring! This double robbery might shut her out of heaven! Her mind projected itself, as minds will, beyond the scene and beyond time. She should, perhaps, be shut from God's face—and how about the baby? Would she and the baby be parted for ever, would baby also be hidden from God's face? On the whole, if she had some one to mind the baby, she would go and mail that letter, and have Letty and the ring ready for the old grandfather.

God tried her here with opportunity. Sara Bott came in. Instead of asking Sara to look after baby for a few minutes, she cautiously showed her the envelope of the letter and asked her to read the address.

"Thomas Dee, Potkin, Iowa," read Sara Bott. "It wont go without a two-cent stamp, Mrs. Kent."

Perhaps she had better keep ring and letter until Letty was old enough to decide what she wanted done. If Letty's mother had wanted that letter sent, why had she not stamped it?

She reviewed her acquaintance with Letty's mother. She had been taken very ill on the train, close to their junction station, and kind-hearted Jem Kent had brought her and the child to his own little house; and kind-hearted Ann Kent had nursed her for a week, and heard her story—the old story of a prodigal daughter who had run away with a bad man; abused as a wife; left beggared as a widow; and going back home to die, sure of a welcome from a father's heart. "I'll never see him now," the dying widow had said, "but he will be right good to Letty." And she had asked Mrs. Kent to hold her up while she wrote the letter to be sent after she was buried. "He'll come for Letty," she said, and she gave Mrs. Kent her little purse, to pay for the nursing and burial. Mrs. Kent had meant to send the letter at once, but in looking over the meagre baggage she found that ring! Then rose conflict in her soul. She must keep that ring for baby! Sara Bott went away, her hostess was so absorbed.

"Aunty," cried Letty for the third time, "*do* give me a piece of nice rag! I want to dress up this stick that is *almost* like a doll!"

"Be still!" cried Mrs. Kent sharply, then started. What! was she cross to Letty? And she was excusing herself for keeping her on

the plea that she loved children, was always good to them, and Letty would be happier with her! "Yes, my lovey," she said gently, and going to her scrap-bag, took out the two gayest pieces and gave them to Letty. Was she not as good as a mother? She would end this matter at once! Who had a better right to child and ring? She tore the letter into three pieces and thrust it into the bag. Meanwhile the baby, pushing the toys before her, had reached the door going on the stairs, which Sara Bott had left open. She threw her treasures down the steep flight, and was going headlong after them, when her mother, with a cry, just saved her by her garment. Trembling and hugging her darling to her breast, she sobbed, "Oh, you silly, silly thing, were those wretched notions worth your throwing yourself away?"

Then her guardian angel whispered in her ear, "Are the child, the letter, and the ring worth your throwing yourself away for?" "It is too late," said Ann Kent. "The letter is torn up. I cannot send it. I don't know what I did with the bits, baby scared me so! I'll be good as gold to Letty, and some day she can have the ring, unless she likes to give it to baby." In fact, next day she gave Letty the ring, and bade her make baby a present of the trash, and she should have a nickel to go and buy a little



lovely china doll! Letty bought the doll, and Ann Kent locked up "*Baby's Ring*."

But the hand that wrote *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin* on Belshazzar's wall wrote all over the walls of the brakeman's home "Thomas Dee, Potkin, Iowa." No one saw these words but Ann, but they burned her eyes with their lurid glow, and she could not sleep at night. She could not eat; she lost flesh; she was cross, cross to Jem; she slapped Letty, she even shook the baby. Why not shake the baby? Had she not for her perilled her soul?

"Sunday-school teacher says," quoth Letty, "that good folks that mind God and do what they know 's right, and all little children, goes up to heaven, and lives along of God, and my mamma's up there. Baby and I'll go there too, aunty; and if you a'n't good 'nuff to go, why—you can stay out, and my mamma'll have baby for her little girl 'long of me."

It was only a child's dream, but day and night it haunted Ann Kent in an awful vision: Letty leading baby within the gates of pearl, and placing her on that dead woman's knee, and she herself wandering in outer darkness, far from God and baby for evermore! When she fell into fitful slumber she saw this vision and woke shrieking.

"Ann," said poor Jem, "if you don't calm

your mind some way, you'll get to the mad-house, and how will I ever get along with baby?" Ann Kent hated the ring and the letter and Letty, toys for which she had sold her soul. Baby was also weary of the spool, the cup, and the gourd. The weather was hot and she cried; these things had ceased to comfort her.

And one night when baby lay ill in her cradle, and Ann thought her dying, she called in Sara Bott and asked her to write a letter, thus: "Thomas Dee, Potkin, Iowa: Your daughter, Jane Bird, died here at my home. Her little girl is here with me. Come get her if you want her. Your humble servant, Ann Kent." So Sara Bott wrote the letter, and put on a stamp and sent it off. A day or two after, going to the scrap-bag for cloth to make a poultice in for baby, Ann Kent found the torn letter. While baby slept she pasted the pieces together. Some way her heart was lighter, even though baby was very ill. She could think of God now without such terror; the world to come was not a black and hideous void. She felt sure she was a very wicked woman; she had failed tremendously; but Letty had a verse on a card to learn for Sunday-school: "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Well, if the great Saviour is seeking the great sinner—what then?

With the day Thomas Dee came, Ann could hush her recovering babe with the singing of a little hymn; over and over she droned it, but it meant much to her:

“I’m a poor sinner and nothing at all,  
But Jesus Christ is my all in all.”

When Thomas Dee came, she led Letty to him, she gave him the letter. “It—it got torn and lost for a while,” she said; and finally, after much talk about Jane Bird’s death, Ann brought out the ring. Oh heavy ring! It seemed to weigh in her hand a thousand pounds.

Thomas Dee turned it over curiously in his hand. He had worked thirty years for Tiffany, until his sight failed; but though sight was too feeble for work in gems, he knew gems well. “Tie it to a string and let the baby have it to play with,” he said. “I wonder where she picked it up? Some of Bird’s trash, I fancy. Letty had better be done with it all. What, did you think it was of value? Not worth a dollar; nothing but prettily cut glass.”

“O silly, silly creature!” whispered the angel in Ann Kent’s ear, “was this bit of shining glass worth the awful peril of your soul?”

## CHAPTER III.

"SEE there," laughed Myrtle to Catharine Hayes, when the Cadmus after the entertainment had relapsed into a state of quiet, and anxious expectancy of something to eat. "See the steward! If he isn't inviting Mrs. Nugent into the buffet! I fancy he is expecting her to tell him how to provide all of us people with a dinner out of nothing, and have something left over."

"As I told you," said Catharine, "those who do God's errands will find errands to do."

"Is it one of God's errands to help feed us?"

"Why not? Christ himself was interested to feed a waiting multitude; and he puts food as among the things that the Father knoweth we have need of. If God were not interested in feeding us, how long would any of us be left alive?"

After Mrs. Nugent returned from her conference with the steward, she asked Miss Matlack to come and sit beside her.

Myrtle whispered to Catharine, "In ten minutes she'll know all Miss Matlack's troubles and wrongs, though the good soul has been very non-committal to us. She found out all about Miss

Lossing's lonely heart-break and despair, having all her family taken from her; and I see it in her eyes that she hopes to secure a longer association for them than merely the trip. See how the poor sad face relaxes as those little patient innocent creatures talk to her. She seems to be a woman who cannot live without creatures to pet and tend! Yes, look, the Matlack has thawed, and is pouring out her woes."

"And has no idea that she is doing it," said Catharine. "Your Mrs. Nugent can read between the lines. I saw her talking a long time last evening with Mr. Brandt, and he looks another man this morning. See him leaning back his head, a smile on that stern, set mouth, building air-castles with his eyes shut!"

After Mrs. Nugent had chatted a while with Miss Matlack, and the latter had then relapsed into her wonted mournful silence, Mrs. Nugent went to the section No. 3 where the musical young ladies were. Presently the three young men in Section 1 entered into their conversation.

"They are preparing a programme for this afternoon!" cried Myrtle. "I wonder what it will be!"

After a little Mr. Glass left the Cadmus, and Mrs. Nugent went into the state-room of the Italians.

"Are we going to have a nice afternoon?"

asked Catharine, when Mrs. Nugent returned to her own section.

"Very, I hope," said Mrs. Nugent.

"And the dinner? Will it be nice, or at least will there be enough of it?" cried Myrtle.

"I hope so. But the fact is, provisions are rather short, if our stay is to be indefinite."

"I think it is snowing much less, almost stopping, and the wind also has gone down," said Catharine.

"But can we get through the drift, this and the indefinite other drifts, if the storm gets over?" cried Myrtle.

"I think engines will be sent out to our help from the nearest station," suggested Mr. Brandt.

"There's dinner coming!" said Catharine as the porter appeared with his little tables; and soon the Cadmus passengers were making the best of what provisions the steward could offer; for by this time the lunch-baskets were all empty. Mrs. Nugent asked Miss Matlack to eat at her table, while Myrtle shared Catharine's. She looked over at Miss Lossing carefully dispensing soup to two happy-faced little ones, and nodded encouragement and congratulation at her.

When dinner was removed Mr. Marshall announced that at three o'clock there would be an entertainment. "Our Italians will give us music, solos and duets; there is among the passengers

of the rear car a transformation man, on his way to an engagement in a show in Chicago. He seems a good fellow, and worked hard all last night with the train-hands in the drift. He loses his place, perhaps, by this delay. After the performance, in which this man will exhibit his skill in transformations, we mean to pass around a hat for him and the Italians. We shall also this afternoon have some songs by our musical young ladies, and a story called an 'Apennine Romanza' from Mrs. Nugent, who wishes to interest your sympathies in behalf of Italians in this country. The story was lately published in San Francisco, and Mrs. Nugent will read it to us. I hope while we enjoy it we shall gain from it better knowledge of the Italians and a strong interest in benefiting them in every way possible while they are with us."

After this little speech by Mr. Marshall, the entertainment presently began with music by the Italians, and then Mrs. Nugent read—

HOW THE GOSPEL FOUND ITS WAY INTO A CORNER  
OF ITALY.

Where are the songs the Fauns,  
Our ancient prophets, sung,  
When none had scaled the muses' lofty height,  
Nor woven words with curious tongue,  
Until that king the bards among  
Who filled our longing ears with large delight?  
—*Ennius* (trans.)

"I think," said Warford, as the carriage crept along the steep road in the Apennines, "that the reason we have heard so much about the beauty of Italian roadsides, the splendor of Italian skies, is that the fashion of praise was first set by English travellers whose roadsides in autumn grow early sere and dull and whose skies are often darkened by fog and mist. The rest of us have echoed the admiration. I do n't mean to say that admiration is not in order; nothing can be more beautiful, but our mountains and skies in America are just as beautiful. For instance, we might be riding in the mountainous counties of Pennsylvania or Virginia this minute and not know the difference."

"What do you say to that scene?" asked Nan, waving her hand. They had turned from the woodland into a scattered hamlet, an assemblage of little farm-steadings rather, each with its small home. Near the door of the nearest cottage stood a tall old mountaineer; his shirt and breeches were of the home-made cloth of the country, his stockings had been knit, and his shoes fashioned by his own hands; thrown over his shoulders, with the grace that is never lacking to an Italian, was a long green cloak made of home-woven cloth, with collar and facings of cowskin; upon the reddish cowskin collar fell his venerable gray locks, and a tall steeple-crowned felt hat



added to his apparent height. He leaned upon a big stick, and seemed to be taking leave of a pretty girl of seventeen and a youth of some three years older. A deep gloom, unusual to the patient and happy-hearted peasantry, was on all the faces. The girl held out to her sire a little wooden crucifix and a china cup, as if entreating him to avail himself of some potency abiding in them. The old man's rejection of the proffer was both sad and angry; the youth, who, having a bill-hook and a small coil of rope in his hand, seemed about to go off to his work, maintained the old man's rejection with open cynicism: "Take your playthings into the house, Nita; they are not for men. We tried them once too often."

A big tear rolled from each large soft black eye of the girl. She held her treasures closer as if in a caress, and said, "To whom shall we address ourselves then? You say our saints are of no use and have no heart for us, and I know Il Conto has none. If we are left without help in man's heart or heaven's heart, what then?"

"A hand-organ and a tambourine for us two, far from our home, and a grave for him by his fathers," retorted the youth bitterly.

The girl began to sob, and the old man, dejected in spirit but bearing himself stoutly, turned up a stony vial as for a long journey.

The weeping girl was a pretty figure, brunette, slender, lithe ; on her head the artistically folded gay-colored shawl, the only head-covering of the contadinas ; her short green dress-skirt left to view the sandals of thong and undressed cowskin and the white knit stockings, while the full white waist and the dark woollen apron with its broad band of gay embroidery lit up the picture with the color dear to Nan Warford's eyes.

Nan was no idle "looker-on in Venice ;" she longed to come close to the hearts of the people among whom she sojourned ; perchance she should find that God had left her some one of his errands to do among them. This weeping girl captivated her fancy ; she must know her better. At a sign Pietro stopped the horses.

"Signorina," said Nan, doing her best with the Tuscan, for they were well down the southern slope of the Apennines, "can you tell us of any pretty place near here, let us say with chestnut-trees and a running stream, where we can spend the day ? It is the child's festa," and she pointed to Lucille. A picnic the contadina would never have understood, but a collation out of doors to celebrate a birthday or a saint's day, that was right and reasonable. The girl wiped her eyes and tried to direct the party to the most beautiful of retreats, a little further up the mountain.

"Could you not go with us," said Nan, "to

show us the place and prepare our lunch for us? We will bring you back at sundown; the little one will be glad to have a playmate while we are sketching. Come, I will give you five francs for the day."

There was a hasty conference between the two young people, and Nita declared her willingness to go. Her face brightened at the thought of an outing. She ran into the house for her holiday waist and a string of beads for her neck, and was presently established on the seat beside Pietro. Her brother meanwhile closed the door of the house and betook himself to the woods through which the carriage had come. Lucille and her brother Tom proceeded to make the acquaintance of the girl guide by presents of bon-bons and a display of the varied contents of Tom's pockets, Nita nodding cheerfully at each knife, nail, wad of cotton string, and piece of elastic produced. Warford and Nan had eyes only for the varied beauties of the way. "Nature's fine work," Warford called it.

Here was a gray thorn with a silver frosting of lichen; into its gnarled heart had pushed the vivid green cone of a little fir-tree, and whipping across both in the light wind lay the long crimson branches of a blackberry bush, glowing blood-red in the late October sun. More exquisite even than the summer pictures are these

studies along the roadsides in autumn. The brambles climb over the rocks and drape them with their pliant stems of blood-red and leaves of bronze and purple; on the wild rose-bushes are clusters of leaves painted in brown and gold by the frost; the cinque-foil bears yet occasional yellow stars, and its leaves have taken the hue of coral; the hawksweed marches bravely in the midst of death and decay, secure of accompanying all the progress of the year. The edge of the bank has fallen away during the rains, and the clay shows ochre, brown and red; the ever-greens are now in their richest prime, and under the tall chestnuts lie heaps of parti-colored leaves. What worlds of wonder lie here at the roots of things! Yon tiny tuft of moss, that rock patched with lichen—they are wide worlds to countless microscopic creatures, and as we bend above them we overshadow them as with a cloud and shut out all their sky. Thus Nan and Warford. Nita piloted them to the retreat she had indicated. There was a ripple of flowing waters of some silver Apennine stream, the constant fall of the large chestnuts on the dead leaves, while the lingering hardy flowers lit the sombre depths of the forest with tongues of flame.

Nita seemed to have thrown off her sadness; no doubt an outing was new to her, and she may have felt it to be her duty to earn her five francs

valiantly. While Warford and his wife planted their easels and set to work, Nita took the children to the brook-side and began to build a flower boat. She knelt on a broad rock and fashioned stern and prow of her frail vessel with elaborate care, weaving leaves and stems and the green fronds of the bracken together, until the hull was finished, and a white frond became a mast and sail. Then the craft was loaded with the daintiest forest treasures, scarlet clusters of berries, pine cones green and brown, velvet cushions of moss, brightly painted snail-shells, glittering feathers dropped by some passing bird. Warford worked with all his might, sketching the girl and her boat; it might be a naiad with a votive offering to the parent of the stream. The boat was finished. Nita laid it on the water, devoutly crossing herself. "I send it to the Lady of Compassion," she said, and sighed as the brilliant construction whirled out of sight on the valley seeking current.

It was time to prepare dinner. The girl proved herself a mistress of woodcraft; she piled up artfully the fuel brought by Pietro and the children; she made a chimney of hemlock bark; she struck a match on a stone; a little puff of smoke, but the noonday sun piercing the leafage absorbed the flicker and heat of the flame. Who could tell if it had caught or no?

But there was the blackened end of the match. Sure enough there had been fire, and now the hidden end of flame crept among the resinous twigs and leaves, and red flickering tongues ran in and about among the fuel, and thin wreaths of smoke curled upward, and then red banners waved triumph—the fire was made!

When the feast was over and the eating of bread and salt had made a bond of friendship, Nan asked Nita,

“Where went your father this morning, and why did you cry?”

“Signora, it is a sad tale; we lose our home.”

“And why?” urged Nan.

“Signora, the case is this: the father and mother of our mother lived with us, and we loved them much. By some evil fate they fell in with a Valdese man who had a little book forbidden by our priests, and they ceased to go to confession or to church, and dying nearly at one time, they died without absolution or the sacraments of the church. The priest would not suffer them to be laid in holy ground, and said they were doomed to eternal fire. But you see, signora, that broke my mother’s heart, and it seemed as if she would go crazy; and our priest, who is a kind man, said no doubt they had sinned through invincible ignorance, and it might be

forgiven them if a great many masses could be said for their unhappy souls and a little shrine built for a votive offering. For this good work we borrowed the money on our little farm from Il Conto. Our priest warned us that Il Conto was a very hard man, signora, and that our home would be lost unless within the two years we could find the money to pay Il Conto back. There was only one thing to be done, signora. My mother and my little brother Tito, who dances and sings like the child-angels about the feet of the Madonna, must go to America and earn this money by singing and playing on the streets. My father was too old, I was too young, my brother Nonni must give his strong arm to the work of our little home."

"And the woman and child went alone?" said Nan Warford.

"No, signora, for Jacopo, who could speak a little English, went also."

"And who is Jacopo?"

"He was our neighbor's son; his people are dead."

"So he has no family?"

"But yes, signora; we are his family."

"I mean no relatives."

"Truly, signora, we are to be his relatives."

"I mean," said Nan, looking smilingly at the

pomegranate flush on Nita's cheeks, "he had no home."

"Dear signora," said Nita with infinite grace, "his home is my heart."

"Was it a home that cost him nothing?" smiled Nan.

"No, signora; all that he had—himself."

"And so they went away?"

"Yes, signora, and sometimes letters from Jacopo, and often none, and for two months none; and the money is due and Il Conto will seize our home; he has wanted it long. Then if they are not dead in strange lands, or buried in the sea, they will return to find their labor lost and the home gone," and Nita sobbed. Presently she resumed her narrative:

"This morning the father went to see Il Conto and beseech him for mercy to wait until we hear from our friends; but woe is me, lady, he might as well speak to this rock on which we are seated, or to the water that flows by our feet! And then, lady, there is another thing: Nonni and the father have grown bitter, and say no doubt the old people were right and the priest was wrong, and the church is but a cruel nurse of souls to impoverish her children; and Nonni wishes the padre had not carried off the little book, and he will not kiss the crucifix for help in our trouble."



"And to which of thy saints wilt thou turn?" thought Mrs. Warford; then she said gently, "My child, why not tell the Lord Jesus Christ all your trouble and ask him to make a way out?"

"O signora! I would not dare! He might be angry. I had hoped the holy mother would remember us, but I suppose she is too busy," Nita sighed.

"And why are you less afraid of the holy mother than of Christ? When did Christ ever show himself unkind?"

"Dear lady," said Nita hesitatingly, "the holy mother is a woman—she can feel for us."

"The Lord Jesus can feel for us, because he carried our sorrows and in all our afflictions he was afflicted. He has shown the great tenderness of his heart towards us by dying for our sakes. When did the Madonna do so much? As you say, she is a woman, and therefore she has not the power to hear or help, being dead; but the Lord Jesus is God, and all power is given to him in heaven and in earth, and he ever liveth to make intercession for us. If you can love and trust Jacopo, who for the sake of helping you has left his home and gone to toil in a strange land, why can you not love the dear Lord, who left the throne of his glory to live in this sinful, sad world, in order that he might redeem our souls and open up a way for us to the

ear of God? It is written in that book which the Valdese man gave your grandparents, that 'as God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for our sakes, will he not with him freely give us all things?' Have you never thought that your church has no right to forbid your reading God's Word? If God gave the Word, he means it to be read."

"But, signora! by the poor and ignorant?"

"He says that he has made it so plain that he who runs may read; and 'a wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.' Besides, child, does it not seem foolish to fancy that God, who possesses the whole universe—who says, 'All the beasts of the forests are mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills,' who says, 'The silver and the gold are mine'—God, who made all things by the word of his power, should ask money for forgiving sin? Sin is forgiven for the sake of the blood shed on Calvary. Do you know that once Simon Peter said to a man who offered him money to pay for spiritual power, 'Thy money perish with thee, because thou thoughtest that the gift of God might be purchased with money'?"

"And, signora, is it possible that the masses and the little shrine which cost us our home have all been thrown away?"

"If your grandparents had died in a state of

grievous sin, I am sure that the masses and the shrine would not have given them any help, for it is not so that sins are pardoned. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved!' As to your grandparents, I believe that in their little book they had learned the way of salvation, and that they rested on Jesus to save them, and that their souls are now in the full enjoyment of God. Christ has said, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.'"

"But, signora, why should the priest deceive us? He is a truly kind man. Why should he rob us?"

"If he is such a man as you say, he may himself be in that state of ignorance of which he accused your grandparents. He is teaching you what he has been taught, and all that he knows. If he would study the little book, he would know how to bring you real help and comfort. At best, Nita, we ought to obey God rather than man; and God has told us to 'search the Scriptures' and to trust only to Christ for salvation. Try the plan I propose to you, Nita; tell your troubles to Christ and ask his help. He knows what it is to want a home; in this world he sometimes had not where to lay his head.'"

"And you think that Nonni is right, and that he is not bringing down the wrath of

God on us when he does not pray at the votive shrine, and refuses to kiss the crucifix to help him out of trouble?"

"O signora, why should I?" said behind them the voice of Nonni, who had come to look after the welfare of his sister. "How can that be God and able to help me, the thing that I myself carved out of a bit of olive-wood? As for the cup, I bought it for thirty centessimi, and the water in it is from this stream at our feet; how can the bit of salt and the padre's blessing give it any power to help me? I do not think the God who made all this world is like that, signora. If I knew what he is like and what he wants of me, truly I might worship him."

"Lo, here is his letter to you telling of his gospel," said Nan, holding out an Italian New Testament which she always carried.

Nita sighed. Was here more heresy aiding that nascent in the heart of Nonni?

"Tell me, Nita," said Nan, "how much is owed to Il Conte."

"Such a sum!" cried Nita with a shiver; "two hundred and fifty dollars, signora; think of that!"

Nan laughed. The amount that seemed immense to Nita to her looked small. Other women of Nan's fortune by means of rich attire

and purchase of jewels and articles *de vertu*, kept themselves too poor for any large deeds of charity. But Nan's array "was such as becometh women professing godliness," and her exchequer was always full. The thought came to her to help these poor people in their need. It was much to be torn from the loved strip of land and go beggared into exile. How small was the sum that might preserve the home, and make possible that other home, the hope of whose vanishing fires was now shining more and more dimly in Nita's black eyes.

"What will you do if you lose your home?" she asked of Nita, for Nonni, seeing his sister safe, had vanished again into the woods.

"Go down to that terrible Risaia and work there until we die of the fever," said this daughter of the mountains.

"And suppose you should not lose the home? Suppose your friends return with the money?"

"O signora! if my mother had enough, she and Tito, to free our place, and did not need Jacopo's money, then Jacopo would build a little home, small and sweet as a bird's nest, signora, for us two, and we should be as happy as the angels are in heaven."

"And what do you live on up here?" asked Nan.

"Oh there are the chestnuts, and the spinning and weaving and carving, and some silk-raising; it is enough when we have the land. It is the land and the roof, signora, and all the rest comes easy."

"Listen then: in that little book, the Gospel which I gave to your brother, though it is forbidden by the padre, it is written, 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ;' also, 'All ye are brethren,' and moreover, 'Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.' So as you, my young sister, have little, but I have much, I will pay for you the money due to cruel count, and—the home is free."

Nita sprang to her feet. "Signora! It is impossible! Can you mean it?"

"Surely," said Nan; "it shall be paid to-morrow. Is it not so, Warford?"

"By all means," laughed Warford; "I wish I could paint that girl as Joy. Yes, let us do what good we can; we shall not pass this way again, says the proverb."

"You must both have fallen down out of heaven," said Nita, but paused, for Lucille and Tom were engaged in squabbling over chestnuts.

When the carriage stopped that evening at the cottage door, the old man was coming out

of the viale. He was bent and dull, as one who has failed, and feels the burden of life press heavily. Nita transformed him with her news. The next day Nonni took Il Conto his money.

The chestnuts had not all fallen when the madre and Tito and Jacopo came home, apprehensive, as they were late through an accident, but jubilant, because the madre and Tito had three hundred dollars, and Jacopo as much more, wherewith to buy back his paternal cottage and its few acres, for himself and Nita.

Nonni waited upon the signora to return their money.

"I want you to keep it," said Nan, "and buy a little home for yourself and the pretty girl you were with at the festa yesterday. In your family and Jacopo's I foresee a little beginning for an evangelical congregation here among the Apennines."

"It is the most discouraging thing," said Warford to Nan a year later, "for us to try and lay up a little credit by benevolence. I thought we had done something truly liberal when we gave that money to save the pretty Nita's home from the clutches of Il Conto, but here I have made back the money ten times over by that picture of the betrothal of Jacopo and Nita which I named AN APENNINE ROMANZA."

Nan laughed that joyful laugh of the heart

that rests safely on God. "You cannot escape from the rules of your Father's house," she said. "That which is given He repays again, good measure, pressed down and running over."

"We hear many complaints about our Italian population," said Mr. Brandt, after the story was ended, "yet really they are very interesting people. This little family that have favored us with music are unusually attractive."

"There is not nearly enough religious and philanthropic work done for them in our great cities where they congregate," said Mr. Marshall. "Here in this country is our great opportunity for them. We ought to send them home prepared to be good citizens and good Christians, and able to build up their native land."

"They are a grateful people," said Miss Lossing; "for several summers a band of three or four harpers passed near my country house, and I always had them invited in to such a breakfast as I knew they would like. They made it a point to reach my home about nine in the morning, and always greeted me so heartily and thanked me with fine Tuscan courtesy."

Mrs. Nugent stated the anxieties of the family in the state-room of the Cadmus.

"That shall all be made right," said Mr.



Brandt. "I am one of the officers in that steamship company, and I will give them a note to our general agent in New York, instructing him to give them passage on the next ship. They may have to stay a few days in the city waiting for the steamer, but I will tell the agent to take them, on my account, to a comfortable Emigrants' Boarding House that belongs to our line. They shall lose nothing by this delay."

Mr. Brandt's whole nature seemed to be expanding, now that he had laid aside his venom against his son.

## CHAPTER IV.

SUPPER was served without accompaniments of cake, butter, milk, preserves, or loaf sugar. To observant eyes it was evident that the slices of bread were remarkably attenuated. Various ineffectual attempts had been made on the drift, and the "transformation man" had fashioned some snow-shoes for himself and had gone some distance ahead, returning to report the snow piled over the track in alarming fashion. The only relief to the situation was that the sun shone out at setting and went down clear over the fields of white, and the thermometer rose several degrees.

A general gloom was observable in the Cadmus; conversation ceased, and there were sighs to be heard. Only Miss Lossing seemed more cheerful: she evidently understood children, and she told stories and nursery rhymes to her orphans, bathed them in the dressing-room, and put them to bed in their little white gowns as happy as if they were at home.

"At home?" thought Miss Lossing; "what home may be before them? An overcrowded home of poverty, where they may be begrudged rather than welcomed!"

Mr. Marshall rose and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, we all seem to feel rather dull, and I think we may find sleep hard to win to our pillows. I propose another story. I shall read it to you. It will not only while away the time, but I hope it is a story with a lesson; and as it may be useful, I am sure you will all be willing to have me invite the men from the forward car in to hear it. We can accommodate them by a little redistribution. I suppose we all know that our friend Mrs. Nugent, who is doing so much to keep up our confidence and cheerfulness, is an author. The story which I shall read is one of hers, just published in an English magazine which I have in my portmanteau. I understand that it is true, as is her *Apennine Romanza*, being an incident that passed within Mrs. Nugent's own experience, and in the story she appears as Mrs. Jevons."

While Mr. Marshall went to invite the men from the forward car, Mr. Glass redistributed the audience, vacating his own section, the Martins', and one other, so ~~that~~ with one or two standing-places all were accommodated. Mr. Marshall then arranged a light, and standing midway in the car read the story of

THE MAN WHO LOST AND FOUND HIS SOUL.

"And I heard a voice complaining,  
'O my ship! How illy art thou freighted!'" *Dante.*

The sea was brimming like an over-full cup. Against highest tide-mark the lazy waves slowly curled in semi-circles of foam, and the light breeze carried these loosened silver-fringes up the tawny reach of sand. The setting sun gilded the little pools of tide-water collected in the hollows, great fishing shallops were hurrying home, looking like birds stooping low over the water, each one lifting a wide white wing. Upon a pile of drift-wood, which he had collected at half-tide, sat an old negro, victim of the *vis inertiae* of his race. Driven out by his wife to get the wood, he now lingered on the beach until night-shadows, dews, and hunger should drive him home. The old negro was two generations from Africa, but he was out of harmony with the busy land of his birth, and belonged rather to the seething jungles, the huts, and the demon worship of his ancestral country: he had more superstition than civilization, and clung rather to Voodoo than the Gospel.

High up on a dune, above the beach, was a small, weather-beaten, two-roomed house; beside it a tall pole, with cordage for running up a light; in the doorway sat a man, his elbow on his knee, his chin in the palm of his hand, his eyes fixed intently on the sea; the eyes and the waves were of the same color, that color that is constantly changing and known by so many

names. The high retreating brow of a scholar, the thin, tightly closed lips of the covetous, the chin of one stubborn because weak, the eyes of one disappointed—in himself and in the world—this was the man in the doorway.

Mrs. Jevons, walking along the beach, drew near the old negro. "Tell me, Uncle D'rius, what is there so strange about that man up there who is always watching the sea?"

"W'y, Missey Jevons, doan yo' know that man had a terrible time? He done los' his soul, an' he done foun' it."

"When and how was that, Uncle D'rius?"

"W'y, Missey Jevons, dis yere coas' am the wust place for wrecks 'long de Atlantic. W'en my gran'daddy wus a boy, folks 'long yere got richer 'long of wreckin' nor any yuther way. It's 'gainst de laws now; ef it wus n't, w'y folks yere would have dere houses full of property f'om wrecks. You see, Missey Jevons, w'en de win' jes' right, an' de waves is rarin' an' tearin', dey drives ships right plumb onto dat yere reach ob rocks an' san', an' dey beats to pieces in no time. Dat yere man, 'bout five years ago, he was in a ship, 'long with yother folks, goin' somewhere, when de Quinoxil jes' whirl dat ship on de reef, an' she broke all up jes' like a chiny sasser w'en yo' drap it. Dis yere man, an' de cap'n, an' two free sailor men de on'y ones

'scape alive. De cap'n an' de sailor men, dey got on a boat turned upside down, 'long couple miles down shore; dis yere man, he come in buffetin' the waves, risin' out of 'em breast-high, an' goin' under head an' all—sech a sight yo' nebber see, Missey Jevons—an' hol'in up an' car'in in an' bringin' 'long a little tot of a boy baby in long clo'es. Well, they bof got in; de baby look like dead, but my ole woman, Dora, she 'lowed she could fetch it to, an' she worked wif it tree hours, an' it's a-livin' yet—mighty peart, han'some boy, too. Well, dat yere man, he had brung in the lile chile, but he lef' his soul out dere in de water; kep' he mouth open too much, an' de waters got his soul out ob him. He jes' like a man distractit—nebber eat nor sleep; but runs up an' down de beach, in de storm what last tree days. Las' he drap down like dead, for a man can't keep up more an' jes so long t'hout his soul, Missey Jevons. Dora, she 'lowed he'd come to, a'ter he slep' a while, an' she piled kivers on him yere on de beach, an' she pours hot coffee an' soup down his froat to gib him suffin' to sleep on. W'en I look out in the mornin', yearly, dere he was, a runnin' up an' down de beach ag'in, jes' tearin'; an', ef you'll believe it, Missey Jevons, dere afore my eyes he foun' his soul. It was wedged in 'tween two rocks, an' he see it as de tide was

rollin' out, an' he rushed in a'ter it an' brung it out."

"What did his soul look like?" demanded Mrs. Jevons.

"W'y, to me," said Uncle D'rius cautiously, "it look jes' like two kegs an' some wood-work, 'cause, yo' see, in this worl' one man a'n't 'lowed to see anudder man's bare soul. To him it look jes' like—his soul. So he car'd it into yander house, an' he stayed all day in dere, gettin' 'customed to his soul, an' after that he repaired that lile house an' lived dere, and paid Dora for waitin' on de chile till he was t'ree year ole. An' he set up dat pole an' light to warn vessels, an' he 'plies hisself to watchin' for shipwrecks an' savin' folks' lives, an' he has save five lives; an' since we done got a Life Saving Station down yander, dey sends for him pretty frequent, for a man whose soul been los' in the water t'ree days, he a'n't afraid of de water, for shore, Missey Jevons."

"D'rius! D'rius! bring home dat wood!" shrilled a voice from behind a distant dune, where a thin smoke curled, denoting the preparation of supper. D'rius groaned and took up his burden.

And now down the beach, chasing whirling balls of weed and foam, came a glorious child, blue-eyed and golden-haired and fair, as if be-

gotten of some Viking line—that child, that treasure-trove of sea and storm, that had been brought in from the wreck. This child looked Mrs. Jevons straight in the eyes, half a dozen dimples broke over his face, like a flush of yellow butterflies rising when a shadow falls across them, and he held out his hand. It was a way he had, a kingly way of doing the honors of the beach. From that hour the woman's heart held him dear. She was rich, lonely, at leisure. Each day she came to the beach to see the child, and brought him gifts and talked and played with him for hours. He was not like a child of the hamlet; his clothes were fine and handsome, his speech was cultured, he could read, and had wonderful information. His father (?), the lifesaver, seemed rendered uneasy by the attentions of Mrs. Jevons to the child. When he came near them, at first suspiciously, then in more friendly fashion, Mrs. Jevons found that he had the language and bearing and neatness in dress of a gentleman, though his clothing was coarse and rough, like that of other toilers of the sea. When she became well enough acquainted to enter the little home with the child, Mrs. Jevons found it spotlessly neat, plain and scanty in its furnishing, but provided with books, a good microscope, and materials for writing. The child called the man "uncle,"



Dora named him "boss;" to Mrs. Jevons, with reluctance, he gave his name as Lawrence. He was full of peculiarities that sometimes suggested to Mrs. Jevons an unsound mind: alert, apprehensive, constant quick turnings, as if he heard a nearing footfall and expected to feel a hand laid on his shoulder; an avoidance of frankly meeting any one's eyes and a singular persistence in sitting on his threshold or exactly in the middle of his room, where he could look through the door at the sea. Mrs. Jevons sat down once on that chair in the centre of the room, and he promptly asked her to move, excusing the request presently by a plea that the chair was incommodious.

The story of Uncle D'rius often recurred to Mrs. Jevons, and she felt as if a part of Lawrence's soul had been left in the sea, and the part that had come out must be constantly watching for it. It became with Mrs. Jevons a passion to evoke this hidden mystery of the man, to find some conjuration potent to call it forth and force it to speak.

"How happy the child seems!" she said, one day when little Hector recited a rosary of laughter, "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" at the capers of a crab stranded on the beach.

"Are we not all happy?" demanded Lawrence. "I am."

"No ; you are not ; you do not look it."

"What do I look like then?"

"You look like one who lives in terror of the unseen. You seem followed by a secret fear. Is it the shadow of the horror of the wreck?"

"Tell me," said Lawrence fiercely, "can any man be truly happy who believes in a hereafter, in heaven and hell?"

"Yes, else our belief in revelation would be the cause of our misery. True belief in divine truth should bring us happiness."

"You use language but poorly," said Lawrence ; "what you mean is *faith*, not *belief* ; belief is an affair of the head ; the devils also believe and tremble ; faith is an affair of the heart as well, and 'that works by love and purifies the soul.'"

"You hold the language of a Christian," said Mrs. Jevons.

"I have been a church member for thirty years," said Lawrence, "if that is what you mean. Have I reared the boy as a heathen?"

"You have reared him well—so far."

"And made him happy. Could he be happier or better anywhere else?"

"It seems not. But what is to be the end of it? Soon, in three or four years at best, this child should have larger opportunities, higher privileges ; would you have him grow to man-

hood knowing only the fishes on the beach, this old negro and his wife, a stray summer guest? What is the life you plan for him? And then, again, what friends has he but yourself? Has he no relatives? Who will care for him if some time, in seeking to save others, you yourself perish? Suppose, instead of coming from the waves with a saved life, you are beaten back on the sand a corpse? Who will then care for the boy? Is he to go to the county house?"

Lawrence gasped and turned pale. "I had never thought of that. It had never seemed to me that I could die."

"You are not the Wandering Jew, it appears. At any hour you may leave this child desolate. Make a will at least; you may leave him to me if you like; or you may tell me what to do with him. That is, if you die; if you live, what then?"

"You said in four or five years," said Lawrence eagerly; "yes, that is right; he will then be past ten. I shall go back to the town where I was born, and there he can be reared as is proper. I have an errand there. It has been my dream since I was a boy—a duty to fulfil."

"The boy is yours? You are his nearest kin?"

"He is mine by the best of rights!" cried Lawrence fiercely, and retreated to his house.

He would not come out to speak to Mrs. Jevons for a fortnight; he tried to keep Hector from her, but the boy was a sturdy rogue and fled with joyous shouts to his friend. And so the summer passed and autumn grew late.

After a night spent in buffeting wind and waves, Lawrence sickened; he became very ill. Aunt Dora nursed him, and Mrs. Jevons visited the little cottage every day. When he took to his bed, Lawrence, with his last failing strength, had pulled it into the centre of the floor, but the door looking seaward was shut by Aunt Dora and a quilt hung over it.

Mrs. Jevons went there one day when the doctor had declared the case fatal. She sat down by the bed. Lawrence gave her a letter: "Open it when I am dead. It gives the care of—all to you. The boy will be all right; with me—all is wrong."

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends. Those who devote themselves to soul-saving or body-saving follow closest after the Master. It seems to me that you could only have been upheld in this path of rigid self-sacrifice and heroism by modelling yourself closely on the divine Pattern and living in his fellowship."

"This life-saving has been, not benevolence, but expiation. The Lord had a controversy with

me, and I have given myself—I have said I would give myself—to ten years of saving lives and saving property, to expiate my sin. But four years of the ten are yet left and I am dying, and how can I appear before God with that count against me?”

“It is not so,” said Mrs. Jevons slowly, “that man may be just with God. Sin is atoned for ‘once for all.’ It is not for us to expiate. No man can, by any means, redeem his soul, nor give to God a ransom for his brother. We have, instead of our own works, the infinite riches of Christ’s work to plead. As for our sins, our part is to confess and forsake, and we shall find mercy. This sin that weighs on you, have you confessed it or made restitution, if restitution was possible and you had injured men in sinning against God?”

“No,” said Lawrence.

“Then confess to God, and to whomsoever you have injured, and ask pardon, and you shall surely receive it, and die in peace.”

“It is too late for anything,” said Lawrence. “Hark. As for the boy, I stole him; that is, during the voyage I learned to love him, and, when the ship was wrecked, his mother put him in my arms and asked me to save him. I said, ‘A baby had better die with its mother,’ but she said no, his father and her mother were

living, and if the boy could be saved for them, it would keep their hearts from breaking. I tried to save them both, mother and child, but the waves took her from me, and I brought in the boy. I knew where to find his people, but I kept him, I wanted him. In the town where I was born in New England my family had been honorable for two hundred years. But my father, being a collector for the county, used and lost county funds. We made it good, but it beggared us. Then I set it as my mark in life to gather money and found a public library in that town, and give it our name, and so make the name honorable again where it was planted. I made the money in South America, and lost it just as I was ready to come home, lost it by one of their cursed revolutions. My passage was taken, and I had written that I should go back to my native place. On the ship in the state-room with me was a returning Brazil trader who had with him his fortune, in two kegs of gold and diamonds. As the storm came up I helped him to fasten those two little kegs to a wooden float, to give them a chance of getting ashore. I knew his name, where he lived, his family. He was drowned. The kegs came ashore. I kept them. They are buried under the floor here, under my bed. I meant to take that fortune to build the library in my town and

rear the boy. The idea of my life was under my hand—I could not let it go. The child had been given to me—in a way. The money—I had saved it. After ten years, inquiry for both would be ended. And in ten years I meant to earn the right to the boy and to the money, by saving lives and property here on the coast.”

“O friend,” said Mrs. Jevons, “it is quite true, then, that you have lost your soul in that storm at sea.”

“You can give the boy back and the money back ; it is in the letter,” said Lawrence, with a deep sigh, “and God can deal with me as he sees best.”

He closed his eyes and sank into deeper and deeper slumbers, as the hands crept tardily across the face of the clock. Deeper, more profound, the sleep, and slowly from his worn face the heavy brooding care and fear departed, and came instead calm, quiet, profound content. In the first hour of his sleep Mrs. Jevons left him, taking with her the letter and the child. Hour after hour the afternoon and the night passed, as it had passed when he slept exhausted on the beach : the morning rose clear as that morning when Uncle D’rius saw him “find his soul.” In this early morning he dreamed, fitfully, of a stormy sea, then on that sea he saw

his Lord walking, serene, majestic, saying, "Peace, be still!" The waves fell into calm beneath his feet, and Lawrence, like Peter of old, " essayed to go to him." Like Peter he sank, and sinking, cried, "Save, Lord! I perish!" Then a Hand was reached to him, and he was lifted up—into life.

He woke. Disease had been held at bay by the Healer; new strength glowed in his veins; he woke, having found his soul, the soul which he had lost in the storm and sea.

When winter winds came, the house on the gray dune was deserted. The child had been given to his father, the fortune to the heir of its owner. And in the village in New England where an old-time name had been once dishonored, it was being lifted into honor again by one who, only a gray-haired book-keeper, yet did well his part before God and man, who by divine grace walked humbly with his God.

After the story ended, with a generous applause and a little general discussion, the porters came to make up the berths. The fair soprano found her way to Mrs. Nugent's side. She looked at her shyly and said, "Do you know, it seems as if you had written those two stories, 'The Glittering Bawble' and 'The Man who Lost and Found his Soul,' exactly for me."



"Of course I did not, as I never knew of you until two or three days ago, my dear. But did they have a message for you? If so, it came from God, and not from me; he has made me his mouthpiece to you."

"I have felt so worried and uneasy and unsatisfied; but I believe that my mind is made up. I mean to tell you exactly how it has been," said the girl. She laid her hand confidently in that of Mrs. Nugent and told her the story which had already been told by Mr. Marshall.

"My dear," said Mrs. Nugent, "I am sure you know that to deceive and pain your parents, as you propose doing, is wrong. You could not expect God's blessing to follow you in such a course."

"I know it. But the life of a vocal-music teacher seemed so humdrum and dull! Yet I must do something until my younger sisters are educated."

"Possibly your parents have made some sacrifices to educate you?"

"Oh they have."

"And is this the thanks you owe?"

"It looks horridly mean of me! But I have so longed for the excitement and success and pleasures of a singer's life! I might not have succeeded, but I wanted to try it. At the same time I knew my method was wrong; I was taking

wrong means to my end. I felt that I was smothering conscience and getting far from God, dishonoring my parents as I would in deceiving and grieving them. I was risking my soul, for what? For a glittering bawble. I was losing my soul, and not gaining even a part of the world! Those stories set my soul's peril before me. I saw how I should never be content, but always far from God and in unrest. I said to my friend and Mr. Glass, 'I cannot do it!' And what did they both say to me, do you think? They said, 'Do n't do it; you are wrong to begin with.' You see, with my friend it is different. She follows the profession of her family, goes with them under their protection, and has not had to take a path of deception and rebellion, as I must have done."

"And you have conquered your temptation? It is written, 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne.'"

"I am not so good as that," said the girl softly.

"We are none of us so good as that except in Christ, through whom we have redemption. It is written, 'Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood.' Remember that you must strive and pray that you fall not again into temptation."

"I will," said the young girl fervently. "I ought to be very thankful for this detention in the snow-drifts. It may have saved me from a great mistake and life-long sorrow. Good-night. I want to kiss you good-night."

Mrs. Nugent bent forward and kissed the soft, pretty face. "Poor child," she said to herself, "she is ill fitted to leave the safe shelter of a home; may God go with her and guide her steps in the way of peace."

## CHAPTER V.

THE morning rose clear and cold. Some of the early-waking passengers heard a conference between the conductor and the steward.

"These men have all been at work on the drift for an hour," said the conductor. "They must work all day, and they must have food, whoever goes without. They must have plenty of hot coffee and meat. What meat have you, and bread?"

"Everything is running out," said the steward ruefully. "I can give them coffee and fall back on tea for the passengers, and cocoa made with water. There's crackers, but the bread is about done. I can make the men a heap of griddle-cakes, but they'll be poor cakes without milk or eggs. There's syrup."

"They'll be too hungry to be particular; make the cakes. Cook some porridge for the passengers."

"Porridge without cream is n't popular," sighed the steward. "I hope the gasoline will hold out for my stove. I tell you, conductor, this is a pretty bad fix! Is n't there something to eat in the express car?"

"I'll see. Hurry up the men's breakfast; they must work, and if we can keep the passengers in good humor things will go easier. What I dread is to have them get to grumbling and fretting and the women crying. Sometimes folks go on as if we made the drifts ourselves, just for sheer spite! That is a poor sort of Christianity that can't help a body through an experience like this! However, our passengers this trip seem to be of the right sort; and if they all keep up their entertainments and story-telling we shall have peace."

"There's a powerful sight of meaning in the stories, pears to me," said the steward, stirring up his cakes.

Miss Lossing, never a good sleeper since her sorrows had come upon her, was awake and had heard this dialogue. She resolved to ask Mrs. Nugent for another story, and to request Myrtle and Catharine to take their share in an entertainment, to secure variety. She remembered that she had in her trunk a large fruit-cake that she was carrying as a Christmas gift from one friend to another. That must be confiscated, and explanations made later. If the steward had lemons and sugar, hot lemonade, crackers, and fruit-cake might serve as a noon luncheon, and so economize gasoline and provisions, and dinner and tea could come together at four o'clock.

That would make a variety. As Miss Lossing planned this for other people, she forgot her griefs and felt happier than she had since her last heavy loss.

After she was dressed she went to propose her plan to the steward, who received it cordially and exhibited nearly a box of lemons. Miss Lossing then found the baggage-master and secured her cake. When she returned to the *Cadmus*, she found Myrtle and Catharine in the dressing-room "doing their hair" as they said, and she began to consult them about an entertainment.

"We have been talking about it," said Catharine. "We must keep our courage up! We have thought that harp music, singing from those two young ladies, and a story from Mrs. Nugent would fill up the time until lunch. Then Mr. Glass can announce tableaux by the juniors as afternoon entertainment. We will have the Martins and Irish Nora and your two babies and the Italians in our tableaux; and the porters will be curtain-tenders and scene-shifters, and Mr. Glass manager."

"Delightful!" cried Miss Lossing; "get about your arrangements at once. This will be the best entertainment of any so far."

After breakfast Mr. Marshall made the announcements for the day. He stated that all the

gentlemen in the Cadmus were quite willing to work on the drift, but that shovels were lacking for so many hands. They intended however to undertake the work from eleven until two, giving the other men a rest.

"If we can manufacture some shovels and snowshoes out of boxes from the express car, we will all get at the work this afternoon and tomorrow, and we hope to get help by an engine being sent to us from the stations east. This big storm has come early and unexpectedly, and we must all bear our delay with patience, and believe that there is some good in it for all of us. God arranges all the affairs of men, and does nothing aimlessly."

In response to a request from some of the passengers Mr. Glass agreed to give a recitation during the morning entertainment.

At half-past nine all was ready, the audience were in a humor to be pleased, and the Italians gave two harp and violin duets. The young ladies sang "Not a Sparrow Falleth" and Mr. Glass recited. Then Mrs. Nugent gave the story of—

#### ONE OF A LARGE FAMILY.

The room was lit only by the glow from the grate. The ruddy light set in strong relief the faces of the portraits on the wall and the black-

clad figure of Miss Duboise. Faces on the wall: old and young, father and mother, brothers and sisters, glad child faces; they were all her family. From this stately city home they had gone out in bridal or burial, and now the home was left to desolation and Miss Duboise. Miss Duboise felt that God had dealt hardly with her. Not that she meant to quarrel with God, but her trouble was greater than she could bear, and she sat down in an apathy of woe.

The servant opened the parlor door and announced "Mrs. Winsted." When orders were given to "admit no one," the friends of this lady had one formula, "but Mrs. Winsted." That was what Miss Duboise had said, and now when her guest came in she wondered why she had said it. It seemed as if she might as well have taken in the whole tide of humanity that flowed along the avenue. Not that Mrs. Winsted was large or loud or demonstrative; small, dark, quiet, she sat down by Miss Duboise. But somehow she was so in touch with humanity, bearing so in her heart its needs, woes, joys, so full of others, so broad in sympathy, that it seemed to Miss Duboise as if she had opened her doors to all the human race, and they were crowding in upon her, and coming between her and the portraits, and putting their living needs and personalities between her and these empty chairs



and dear graves. Miss Duboise half resented this; she was hugging her sorrows and living on them and in them.

Mrs. Winsted studied the unutterable sadness of her friend's face, drained of all joy. If this brooding did not end, mania was likely to supervene upon morbidness.

"Still shut up here, dearheart?"

"Why not? What is there else for me to do? No one needs me. I am cast out like a withered branch. There is no one to care for me or claim me. All other lives seem so full and mine so empty. I am so alone. You cannot tell how dreadful it is not to be needed anywhere."

"Do you want to be needed, dearheart? Do you wish to find life full once more? Do you desire gladness and to be content to live, not yearning for death? Do you really prefer to wake up in the morning finding the day full of duties, with grateful loving faces turned again to yours?"

"It is impossible," said Miss Duboise coldly.

"Do you desire it?" said the gentle but insistent voice. "Or by slow degrees has sorrow become your life and your preference? Do you feel as it were treachery to the dead to be glad once more?"

"Almost that," sighed Miss Duboise.

"Is it not treachery to God to sit with folded hands, rebelling against his prolongation of your days, looking ever to those things that are behind, and not, Christian-like, pressing to those things that are before, knowing that at the end of this line of sequences Jesus is sitting with our welcome at the right hand of God? Dearheart, our Father is not honored by children with cloudy faces, nor is he served by idle hands or sorrow-bound feet. You err thinking that you are or can be alone."

"I know," said Miss Duboise; "you mean that I have the promise of the Christ always with me. I know it, but somehow he seems so far away, so intangible, so impersonal; and even when I come nearest to him, and realize him most, he does not need me, but I him, and I am longing for the old habit of being needed."

"Dearheart, you read God and humanity wrong. The Christ needs us and is near to us in his children; he is tangible to us in his brethren in the flesh; we get closest to him, and find him a personal Lord most fully, when we clasp, for his sake, the hands of those who need us. Listen, my friend. In your humanity all the human race are kin to you, and nothing that concerns them should be foreign to you; you have suffered, and by that sacrament of sorrow all the host of human sufferers are your kin.

But nearer still comes the relationship that we find in the trinity of God, one Father, one elder Brother, whose face we can see in all the pleading and pitiful faces turned towards ours. I said you could not be alone, because in God's providence the world is full of the needy; one of God's ways of setting the solitary in families is to gather in heart kinship those the brethren of whose blood have gone to the upper home. Dearheart, your loved ones, mature in spiritual experiences and made meet for glory, have served their generation and fallen on sleep. God has left you here to prove you. Will you elect to wither in selfish repining, to suffer the atrophy that overtakes the unexercised heart? Consider that the call may come to render account of the disused talent, and your eyes may be turned too late towards the unhelped host of humanity while the Lord says, 'Ye did it not to me.' "

"In my sorrow," said Miss Duboise, "I have grown timid and so unused to the world that I could not find my place there nor begin to mingle with others. I should only make mistakes. I feel a positive terror of the world outside of these four walls."

"I know it. Your place in God's house is almost always vacant, your doors are closed to your friends; you are missing the lessons which

God would teach you, all with which he would enrich you by means of sorrow. Your case has become critical. Trust me for three months to bring the world to you; say that you will take up the work which I lay at your feet. If after three months' trial this course is not well, I will urge you no more."

"Do as you like," said Miss Duboise listlessly, but her heart misgave her; this was large license to one like Mrs. Winsted.

Three days later Mrs. Winsted came to her friend.

"I have brought you one of your family—a mother in Christ, left in her age dependent on a poor niece with a large family, where she cannot have the comforts that she needs."

Miss Duboise went down to the parlor and found a sweet-voiced, faded old lady, who, taking her hand, said,

"The dear Lord, who put it into your heart to ask me here, will repay you. I cannot even thank you."

Miss Duboise had not asked her, was appalled at her presence; but as a true lady it behooved her to hide all that and rouse herself to order a room suited to the needs of her guest. Miss Duboise had a nice taste in dress; she realized that this shabby little figure would have attractiveness arrayed in a black silk gown and

white *lisse* cap and neckerchief. She forced herself out to buy this gear. The delight of the old lady in a ride fairly drove Miss Duboise to order her carriage and take her out daily. It was not courtesy to her guest to neglect to go to the table and to refuse to eat while there; she ate to keep her old lady company, and food and exercise sent her blood more vigorously through her veins and waked her up to a stronger life. What tales, what experiences, this Christian sister, who had known so much of hard struggle with adversity, could tell; what spiritual heights she had reached! The old lady had in a few weeks become a fixed and pleasant fact in Miss Duboise's existence, when one day Mrs. Winsted came in calmly carrying a crippled child of four.

"They cannot keep her longer at the hospital," she said, "and she is an orphan. I believe such skill as yours can complete her cure. Of course you will need a nurse for her. I can tell you of one, a young girl whose health has been injured by work in a shop."

Miss Duboise loved children and had marvellous tact in getting on with them; the child was no sooner in her arms than she seemed to nestle in her heart. How pathetic was the artless baby prattle about past miseries, what *naïve* delight she showed in her present surroundings!

The old lady, the young girl, the child—it seemed that Mrs. Winsted thought that there were not enough, for she brought to Miss Duboise an honest, bashful lad, son of a country parson, a boy of eighteen, who had come to the city to learn the book business.

“I have brought you a nephew who needs an aunt,” said Mrs. Winsted; “he needs a lady who can interest herself in him and continue in him the habits of his early home.”

Miss Duboise had a happy faculty for pleasing young men; she knew how to enter into their feelings and interests and lead them to make the most of themselves; she had had brothers and nephews about her. The lad brought a wonderful brightness and life into the home.

That home was transformed: the old lady and the child needed sunshine, cheer, laughter; the young girl revealed to Miss Duboise the sorrows and the struggles of the respectable poor. Harry put Miss Duboise once more *en rapport* with books, lectures, music, and politics. The pew at church was full now; Miss Duboise found time and means and heart for the charities and philanthropic and religious interests of the day. Those who had come into her heart and home made room not only for themselves but for others. They opened up to Miss Duboise new ways of doing good. She could no

more complain that her Lord seemed far off and impersonal. He had become to her a little sanctuary in her Marah land and opened there a door of hope. Wider and wider grew the circle of her happiness—

“Till like a ray of light across the land  
Her heart's large love went brightening more and more.”

The morning's entertainment closed with a solo by the soprano. It was then eleven o'clock, and all the gentlemen departed to take their turn on the drift. Young Martin, his sister, Myrtle, and Catharine busied themselves about their afternoon tableaux. The little girls being carried off to practise, Miss Lossing was left alone. She beckoned to Mrs. Nugent, who went and sat beside her.

“Did you mean me?” said Miss Lossing, looking at her friend with earnestness. “Did you tell that story for me alone?”

“I did not mean you when I wrote it, for then I did not know you. But for you I drew it to-day out of the depths of memory, and I told it for your ear, your heart, your conscience. Your griefs are great, your sadness fills me with sympathy, and I believe that in rebuilding a home and a family, calling about you those who are homeless, you will find healing for your own woes and do an errand for God.”

“And where and how shall I begin?”

“Possibly with these orphans who have been providentially placed in your care. When we reach Cleveland, stay and see their aunt, and consider whether it will not better their case to take them finally under your own care, if the aunt will consent.”

“I will stay if you will stay with me and help me make the inquiries.”

“I will do so gladly, and it may need but a few hours to settle all satisfactorily.”



## CHAPTER VI.

THE tired passengers who had been working on the drift were very ready at two o'clock to take their rest in the warm Cadmus, be refreshed with hot lemonade and the fruit-cake, and then for an hour and a half to sit at ease and be entertained by the tableaux improvised by the young girls. After that was over, setting the tables and dinner occupied the time until the lamps were lit

"All our snow-shovelling," said Mr. Brandt to Mrs. Nugent, "amounts to very little. We have worked, at least all of us in turn have worked, since daylight, and not over a mile of track is cleared. At the end of the mile there is a less encumbered space, and the engine may be able to make some headway for itself. However, action is morally better for us and more hopeful than idleness. The fact is, there is not very much coal on hand now to go on with, for the cars must be kept warm. However, our hope is in the relief engine with the steam snow-plough, which will surely reach us to-morrow. Then we can go to a station, where we can get fuel and a supply of food."

Mr. Marshall, who had installed himself as Master of Ceremonies, now rose and said, "You will all be glad to hear that Mrs. Nugent has been spending her spare time in writing out an experience of hers, or rather one which passed under her observation at her seaside home, and she will read it to us to help us through the evening pleasantly. The story which Mrs. Nugent has written out is unfortunately not an exceptional one. There are many hearts saddened by indifference and ingratitude. For all such there is a Friend who will never leave us nor forsake us, a Friend who sticketh closer than a brother."

There was a profound silence in the Cadmus as Mrs. Nugent read—

POOR MA'AM STEL'.

The sea was blue as a sapphire; the sky was blue as the sea. Across the sea drifted little furrows of foam; across the sky white clouds like a man's hand were floating. I found her sitting on the shore. There was vigor and pathos in her figure. Standing a little removed, I noted the strong hands, the arms bared above the elbows and clasped about her knees; her auburn hair knotted loosely upon the snowy nape of her neck; her brow, broad, low, calm, patient, a brow to bend above a cradle; her eyes

steadfast, as if there were tears which must always be kept back because of pressing human needs; the corners of the large, pleasant mouth drooped a little, but readily curved into a smile; her complexion, such as had been left her after twenty-six years of braving wind, sun, and storm, making her way in the world. There was a certain majesty about her, due more to the noble soul indwelling than to her stately size and grandly moulded shoulders. I had been directed to her as one skilled in "doing up fine muslins," but finding her there, serene and self-contained on her native sands, I hesitated to prefer my errand.

We fell into conversation, and presently I told her why I had come to her.

Yes: she would be glad to do anything; gains were small, and the simplest living cost money that was hard to get. She had only the house; she half turned her head. The house, a brown, storm-beaten, four-roomed fisher's home, was close behind her, on the crest of the beach. There was a well-kept look about it, and in the yard and over the door certain hardy plants endowed with some of the valor of their owner were struggling for existence. "For herself," she said quietly, "hardship did not matter much, but for the child—"

The child, a radiant four-year-old, made wells

and tunnels in the sand; no signs of poverty or struggle about her; she might have belonged to one of the few summer guests in the hamlet.

I asked, "Why do you not go to the city? Work for one as capable as you are would be readily obtained and wages high."

She shook her head. "We fisher-folk are loath to change; we pine for the sea. I could not sleep without that rush of water in my ears. And then—my dead are there." She half turned again, toward the little burial ground on the dune; a place crowded with crooked, sunken, lichen-covered stones, while here and there a new one showed straight and white amid the thick-leaved seaside vegetation.

"Ma'am Stel'," said the child, "if this pink shell was a boat, I could sail off into the gold over there, and never come back to you."

"Your sister?" and I touched the child.

"Yes, and I want her to grow up here, where our people have lived for a hundred years; I think then she will be patient and loving and true. The city might wean her from me; I am but a plain woman."

O Ma'am Stel! faithfulness depends rather on the temper of the heart than on environment; what would ever have made you fickle, or Nannie true?

I knew her story before I saw her, but as we met often she told me the history herself, in terse snatches of narrative, suitable to her repressed and reticent nature. Three brothers in their boyhood were lost at sea. When Nannie was born Stel' was engaged to the young captain of the coasting schooner of which her father was mate. Beside Stel's home as I saw it lay crumbling in slow ruin the stone foundation of a house. Her father had given her the site, and the captain had begun to build a home for Stel'. It had been abandoned just as the frames of the cellar windows had been set, and these started like eyeless sockets from the pathetic ruin, while among the dislodged stones grew sea-kale, golden rod, and the clinging foliage of wild lupine. In a November storm the coasting schooner had gone down with all on board, and the sea-battered bodies were carried to the little burial-ground. The mother, one whom many storms of sorrow had broken, laid her baby as a dear burden on Stel's stronger heart and died. For Nannie, Stel' lived and labored in unconscious idolatry and the weakness born of her exclusive love.

I watched them as the years sped on. The elder sister aged, but Nannie grew like a summer flower.

Time dulls the bitterest pain. There was a

brave captain of forty who began to go often to the little brown house beside the ruined foundation wall. Some of the habits of old days returned to Stel'—the sweet habit of trusting some one revived; it was well to be thought of and cared for; a calm deep affection came into this strong woman's heart. And then, he was so good to Nannie! What a brotherly protector he would be to the gay, heedless beauty of seventeen!

It was spring and the captain was away on a cruise. Nannie came in from the postoffice with an open letter. She read, laughed, blushed, handed it to her sister. "There, Ma'am Stel'," still the old childish address. The elder one took it and read "My dear little wife." It was signed "Your loving husband, David Grant."

"What does this mean?" asked Stel'; her heart was hot, and her lips burned as if touched by flame.

"Oh just that we got married at the village the other day, before he sailed."

"And—never told me!" It was a cry of reproach.

"We knew you would say I was too young, and—and people would joke and talk because of the difference in our ages. So we concluded to be married first and talk afterwards."

Stel's face was white and drawn in one of

those sudden transformations of envy and pain that make faces old.

"But I have been your mother, Nannie! This is so sudden!"

"There! I knew you 'd scold and be angry and perhaps not want me to stay here! As if it is not bad enough to live in such a dismal place and have one's husband go off at once and not take one along!" Nannie flung herself, crying, on the chintz lounge.

"I'm not scolding, Nannie; and as for being here, you have the same right here that I have, my child." Then Stel' went out into the sunset to that place of graves, and put her arms over the graves of her mother and of the lover of her youth, who were sleeping side by side. The sunset faded, the dews fell, sober twilight came on, and in that dusky spring silence, with the breath of the arbutus about her, God gave her the victory over self, and she took from her heart the love that had become so strong. Pale and calm she returned to the darkened cottage. Nannie was still crying on the chintz lounge. Ma'am Stel' lit the lamp, made a pie, cooked Nannie's favorite dishes, and coaxed her to dry her eyes and eat.

\* \* \* \* \*

A year rolled by, a year and a summer, and a fierce equinoctial beat upon the sea. As the

blackness, lightning-rent, brooded and the waves roared reply to the thunder, lights passed about the little brown house, and shrill upon the tempest sounded a baby's first cry. It was Ma'am Stel' who received the child, washed and dressed it, prayed God's benediction for it, and laid it in its mother's arms. At the touch of that babe's soft little form a new love rose up in Ma'am Stel's great maternal heart; here was a fresh claimant for love and care and sacrifice, and Ma'am Stel' was glad.

They called her out into the storm, when Nannie slept.

"He's lost, swept overboard, out by the Bishop. 'The Gull' got in an hour ago without him. How goes it in there?" The fisher's rough voice had undertones of sympathy and the awe begot of sudden death.

"A boy: we have named him David Grant."

"God bless him! he is fatherless."

"A father of the fatherless, and a judge of widows, is God in his holy habitation," said Ma'am Stel'; but left alone in the drenching tempest, she bowed her head upon the gate, and her sobs mingled with the moans of the storm and tears rolled over her face like the rain. Love is not always gone from the heart when we think it gone, Ma'am Stel! Again God gave her the victory over self; she took up the burden of



daily life as valiantly as in the years gone by. Stel' never forgot, though Nannie did. Nannie complained rather that she must live on in her early home than that she had lost David. Four years passed, and then Nannie said, "Ma'am Stel', I have written to David's sister, who is housekeeper in a hotel, and she has found me a place in the linen-room. I shall go Monday. I'll die if I stay here another month."

Ma'am Stel' caught David to her bosom. "O Nannie, you can never take him from me?"

"Take him! Why, Ma'am Stel', what could I do with him in the city? He'd cry his eyes out after you in a week. I'll send what money I can spare—"

"You'll leave him? You'll let me have him, Nannie?" Ma'am Stel' hugged her treasure close. Here was her compensation; for how much neglect could Nannie be forgiven when she left her the child!

It was the old story re-told. She lived in and for David. The woman and child were inseparable. Nannie married in two years a widower with a boy. She wrote: "The boy is David's age and like him; they might be twins. What would I do with two boys? You may keep David, Ma'am Stel'. He is more yours than mine."

Nannie had married a man well-to-do, in a

good position; she was ashamed of the little brown house, the ruin, the ill-kept graveyard, the plain gray-haired sister, the strong woman. She did not return to her early home until David was ten years old. Then she came suddenly to take him away; the other boy had died, there was money that ought to go to David. She came one day and left the next. One or two loving childish letters from David, and then silence fell. Ma'am Stel's heart broke in her final desolation. Silent, gaunt, patient, she took the downward way to death.

I wrote to Nannie's husband when the end drew near, telling him how the dying lips asked for "David, little David." Nannie came, shedding a "few idle tears," but came alone.

"The boy? where is my child?" panted Ma'am Stel'.

"At school. It would have so interrupted his studies and hurt his feelings. I did not know just how you were, Ma'am Stel', and—" she swept a disdainful look about the meagre place—"it is better he should forget—"

"Nannie! forget! forget me, you and little David!" This bitter cry was Ma'am Stel's last rebellion against her meed of ingratitude and forgetfulness.

It had rained all that day, but it cleared at sunset; the lighthouse-tower rose white against

the crimson light; above the fleecy trailing folds of rain-clouds were great opaline reaches of sky, and below them fountains of molten gold; the light shone into the poor room and lit Ma'am Stel's face. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." The voice of her Lord spoke to her soul. Through all her way of loss and pain this One had known her soul in its adversity; He too had been forsaken by his friends and denied by his heart's children, and coming near her in her loneliness and the gloom, he filled her longing soul with himself, turned the shadow of death into morning, and led her away to the land of peace.

"Come down to help and heal us,  
Thou that once life's pathway trod,  
Knowing all the gloom and glory—  
Son of man, and Son of God."

When the reading was ended the hearers of the sad little story seemed rather inclined to meditate than to speak. The porters went about to make up the berths; Catharine and Myrtle sat with Mrs. Nugent, and Miss Matlack sat in No. 9 with Miss Lossing.

"Tell me," whispered Myrtle coaxingly to Mrs. Nugent, "for whom did you mean that story? I know you felt that it would fit some one in this car. Was it for Miss Matlack?"

"Yes, it was."

"Poor soul! Isn't it horrid to be treated ungratefully? I believe I would not stand it! I would fight and defend myself!"

Meanwhile Miss Matlack, seated by Miss Lossing, had continued to sigh deeply and could not restrain the tears which rolled slowly down her cheeks, and which she wiped off fur-  
tively with her hard-working, worn hand.

"You are in trouble," said Miss Lossing gently, laying her fine small hand on the seamed brown one. "Can you tell me what it is? Sympathy helps to heal the wounds of the heart."

"Her story," sobbed Miss Matlack, "went right home! Of course she didn't know it would fit me so pat, for we are strangers, and I have n't said anything to her in particular about my troubles. But I do know how it feels to be deserted and neglected and begrudged by them you have done for and loved and lavished yourself on." Then, perhaps for the first time in her life, Miss Matlack poured all her troubles into a human ear. At eighteen she had been left an orphan with six young brothers and sisters to care for, and no property but the little village house and lot and the cow. To the young family she had devoted herself. She had, for their sake, renounced her hopes of her own married home. She had denied herself and

toiled late and early to provide for and educate the six and set them up for themselves. One had died, the other five had grown up ; perhaps Miss Matlack's devotion and self-abnegation had nourished selfishness in them. The eldest had gone to the Sandwich Islands and, intent upon making himself rich, had seldom even written to his family. The eldest girl had become a teacher in a grammar school in a city, and unfortunately was ashamed of the plain, uneducated woman who had sheltered her childhood. The second of the brothers had done fairly well in business, lived in Portland, and had married a giddy girl, who treated poor " Sister Mary " most unkindly, so that she had drawn her stay in their house to a close. " I'm going to Troy to see my youngest sister, and it will be the same story. Jane is good enough and she likes me, but her husband is a near, hard-fisted man, and he says they do n't need me there and families should live alone. It's the same with the other sister ; she married sort of rich in Buffalo, and I'm so plain and homely she do n't like me to be there. I'm going to find work and keep to myself, and see if I can lay up a few dollars, so that the children wont have to send me to the poorhouse when I'm past work."

" And what work can you do?" asked Miss Lossing.

"I used to be a master-hand at tailor work. Many is the month I've worked till twelve at night on boys' trousers or vest finishing, to get money to keep those children well dressed and at their schooling. But now my tailor work is out of fashion, I reckon, like the rest of my belongings. I'm uncommon good at white sewing, hand or machine; but now-a-days the white goods are mostly made up in big work-rooms where one girl does one part and another another, and so throw the garment from machine to machine and finish it like lightning, and the pay is so low and slack times are so many, I could n't live by it. I'm fine at housekeeping; I can keep a house spick and span, darn table linen, make preserves and jelly and pickles, and do up lace curtains; but I can't bear to take service, and sit in the kitchen and sleep in the attic with a lot of giddy, untidy foreign girls. And I'm past middle age and have been independent, and I do n't like to be asking leave every time I want to step out!"

Miss Lossing listened with interest. She had known but little about poverty, and nothing of family coldness and ingratitude. She felt that this woman's sorrows were worse than sorrow over the dead. She herself wept for faces hidden under coffin-lids, but oh how sweet had been companionship! What tender heart com-

munings, what faithful care, what fond and comforting last words, what hopes of everlasting reunion, had fallen to her portion !

“ I too am alone in the world,” she said gently. “ I have been travelling for my health, and now I am going to my lonely home. I have a house in Philadelphia, and a house in the country for summer. I want to build up a family for myself. Perhaps I shall adopt those two little children who are with me ; and I know of two young girls, daughters of an invalid minister, who shall share my home and my care until they finish their school-life and are able to teach. I suppose you do not wish to pass Troy without visiting your sister. Go there, and when you are ready to leave her, come to me. I am sure I can find you a place and work in my house, with a room all to yourself. If we do not mutually suit, then I have no doubt that I can find you a position with some of my friends. You will feel better and more independent, going to the house of your brother-in-law, if you go for a limited time, with an assured position before you.”

“ You believe I will !” cried Miss Matlack, “ and it will go hard if I can’t make it worth your while to keep me. If I can have my room and fire and light to myself, where I can sew, and read my Bible and hymn-book and my ‘ Pil-

grim's Progress' and my 'Saint's Rest,' I shall feel just made. I'm friendly to children, and if you keep those little girls, I reckon I can teach them to sew, knit, and crochet equal to the best. Dear me! if it turns out that the Lord led me into this snow-drift to give me a good honorable home, where I can make my way, what a providence it will be! My berth's been made up this long while, and here I'm intruding on you! Wont I sleep more comfortable this night! Now when I go to Troy I wont shiver at Bill Hardy looking black at me week in and week out, while I'm looking for work. I can say at first I've only come to stop a week, having a good position offered me. Thank you for your card, Miss Lossing; I'll treasure it like gold!"



## CHAPTER VII.

THE next morning, while the porters were making up the berths, the conductor came into the Cadmus with a joyful face. "Good news! Good news! We hear the whistle of the relief engine! We are getting up steam, and will go on to meet her as far as we can. By noon we will be where we can get coal and something in the way of provisions!"

This announcement created great joy. People rushed out to listen for the sound of the distant whistle. The young men climbed to the top of the car, and got their opera-glasses out to see if they could discover the engine with the plough coming across the levels of snow. Finally the claims of breakfast were remembered, and with cheery faces they sat down to their meagre fare. It was late when they finished the meal. Then Mr. Marshall said, "I suppose the progress of the relief engine, her arrival, and our own start will engross all our thoughts until we are once more under way. After that, Mr. Glass will occupy the time until we reach the next station; he will give us a little story, one of the readings he sometimes uses at entertainments. After we have reached our first station, taken on stores,

had dinner, and are comfortably on our way, we shall be entertained by a Boys' Programme under the auspices of Master Martin. He thinks that the boys have not had a fair showing so far. True, only the Italian lad, Master Martin, and two younger boys represent young lad-hood on this train, but they must have their own innings. The Italian will give us some music; Master Martin will amuse us with some Chinese impersonations; Mr. Glass will recite 'The Boy Friend,' and 'The Pet Coon;' our two little men in No. 7 will each speak a piece, and as Master Martin demands a boy's story, I will give an episode from my own college days."

These announcements were heartily applauded; this morning every one was in a humor to be easily pleased. The rescue engine was now in sight, and all the passengers crowded out to watch her approach, the mighty machine tossing the snow before her and on either side into showers, spray, eddies, whirls, fountains of dazzling white. After that, just to be moving eastward was pleasure enough for a time; and then a switch was reached, the relief engine backed into it, and the train passed on, and the snow-clearer pursued her way to take up the abandoned Europa and the companion car, and then to clear the track for trains that were further west delayed by the storm.



*On a Snow-bound Train. Page 122.*



Finally a little town was reached, and the steward secured ham, eggs, milk, bacon, flour, butter, and honey, with bread, cheese, and potatoes. Here was wherewithal for a dinner, and while cooking was in progress Mr. Glass was reminded of his recitation. He advanced to the centre of the car and said, "I commend my little recitation to the young ladies. It is intended for those who think they must waste time in studying music, when they have neither taste, talent, leisure, nor means for that pursuit. There is more time wasted on music than on any other part of education, because so many take it up just because other people do. Not all birds are singing birds; and not all young folks are possessed of musical abilities. My recitation is called

"THE USE OF A LEGACY."

"Aunt Prudy Prine's Jane's Nelly" had received a legacy. "Aunt Prudy Prine's Jane's Nelly" was a plain, quiet damsel of sixteen, and the neighborhood had taken very little notice of her except to remark occasionally that "Aunt Prudy Prine's Jane's Nelly" was growing into a tall sprig of a girl. Now that she had received a legacy of two hundred dollars to do as she liked with, the maiden's name was in everybody's mouth; for two hundred dollars was a

large sum of money where money came so hard among the rocks and hills and summer droughts. What would "Aunt Prudy Prine's Jane's Nelly" do with so much money? Some of the older farmers said, "It is a born shame that a slip of a girl like that, who has no sense about handling money, should be allowed to waste all that. 'Siah Prine ought to take it in hand himself and lay it out buying more land." There was not a man of them but could have told 'Siah Prine what to do with that two hundred dollars.

'Siah Prine, however, kept silence; two hundred dollars was a deal of money and he hoped his daughter would not throw it away. He recognized her right to do what she would with her own, and as for advice, he put a deal of confidence in Aunt Lavinia, who, wise as an Alruna wife of old, sat by window or chimney corner and knit the family stockings.

"Nelly," said Aunt Lavinia, "what are you going to do with that money when it's paid over to you?"

Then it became evident that this quiet little girl, who had daily put on sunbonnet or hood and trudged off to the district school, had some cherished aspirations, some little ambitions of her own.

"I thought I'd like to take some music lessons, Aunt Lavinia."

"Music! For the land's sake! Why you haven't so much as a jewsharp to play a tune on!"

"The lessons are ten dollars a term, and I thought I could get to be a pretty good player if I could take ten terms. That's all Fanny Gay had."

"But Fanny Gay is a born musical. She can start the tune in meeting and she can pick up a piece just hearing it played once! Now there never was a Prine had gifts for music. Music's a *gift*, child. And then you have nothing to play on."

"I would have a hundred dollars left over, and if father gave me fifty more I could get a parlor organ. Or he might give me two hundred perhaps, and we could buy a piano."

"And then, child, what would be the good of the piano?"

"Why, Aunt Lavinia," cried Nelly, almost tearfully, "I want to have something for furniture in our front room. Just think how bare and skimpy it looks! I've been wondering how I could do when I got a little older and began to have company, with such a dull, ugly-looking room to take folks into. It looks just as if it had been peeled!"

Aunt Lavinia knit to the seam, stuck the fourth needle carefully into the leg of the blue

stocking, rose, opened the door to the best room, and critically inspected that clean and unsatisfactory apartment. An ingrain carpet, flowered paper shades, six cane-seat chairs and a rocker, a small table, covered with a red cotton cloth and upbearing a glass lamp, a Bible and a photograph album; before the closed fireplace a square of oilcloth on which stood a sheet-iron wood-stove. Aunt Lavinia excited her imagination to depict Nelly sitting stiffly on one of those cane-seat chairs, and one of the youths of the neighborhood on another. The surroundings would be barren in the extreme and possess nothing suggestive of themes for conversation. Aunt Lavinia returned to her knitting.

“So, Nelly, you’re wanting to take a hundred dollars’ worth of lessons to make you liable to have a piano or an organ. It appears to me your pa’d have to strain a point mighty hard to help you to either of them, and come to look at it, neither of them is a real handsome piece of furniture. They are, to my mind, awkward, big, unreasonable-looking things, and what you want next will be a worked cover to ornament them or keep them from the dust, and a lot of music and a stool. If you’re wanting a piano for furniture, Nelly, I could tell you how to make that room pretty as a picture out of half the money; and the bigness of the piano would make those



chairs and that spindle-legged table look stingier than ever; and the shine and polish on the organ or piano would make that carpet and the blue paper curtains look a sight worse than they do now."

"But I want something," said Nelly, the pretty eyes full of tears at Aunt Lavinia's ruthless words. "I want *something*, so I can be and do and look more like other folks. I don't know what to say when I go out, and I have n't a decent pretty parlor to ask people to—and—and—"

"You can't talk, Nelly, for two reasons," said Aunt Lavinia soothingly. "One is you've never been out enough to feel easy and you're bashful; and then again you have nothing to say. I don't calculate that taking lessons would make you less bashful, and I'm afraid you'd be the kind that never would play, because having no genius for it you never would come up with Fanny Gay and one or two more that have music in them."

"But, Aunt Lavinia, Uncle Josiah wrote it out that he'd like me to use the money, or part of it, on education."

"Well, it seems to me music is n't all there is left of education. Now, Nelly, let me tell you my views of it. If a family, all or most of them, like music, and the father and mother set store

by it so it rests them to hear it, and the children take to it naturally, so that they learn it easy; and the organ or piano is set in the room where the family stays, and those that take the lessons are ready and willing to play for the home-folks, why then I say it is good to have the music. But if just one in the family, say a girl without much taste for it, sets up to have music, mostly because her friends do, and wants it to be kept in the spare room away from the family, and lays out to play her music just for visitor folks, not for her pa or ma or brothers, then I don't hold to it."

"But, Aunt Lavinia, pa and ma and the boys don't care for it. They would n't want to have the organ out here, or to come and hear me play."

"Then, Nelly, why, being a part of a family and not a lone person by yourself, why don't you lay out to get with your money what could be enjoyed with the rest? The music would take you many hours of drumming and pounding learning it, when you ought to be helping your mother sew or work. You ought to consider it one of your growing-up privileges to help your mother and not let her wear herself into her grave or a lunatic asylum. Then you'd do your playing evenings, shut up there with some young man, who perhaps, way down

in his boots, didn't care a penny for it, and your pa and the boys wouldn't be thought dressed up enough to come in and hear, and your ma would be too busy damping down clothes or mending socks."

Nelly hung her head. How true this was to what she had seen among the neighbors! Once more she gasped, "Aunt Lavinia, I want something!"

"So you do," said Aunt Lavinia encouragingly, "and what you want, I take it, is what will make the most of you and the most of the family; when you belong to a family, the family ought to be considered. To my mind the things that furnish up a house best are books and pictures and something soft and pretty-like to the windows, and something bright and taking-looking in the way of cushions and bags and so on. I'll allow that the miserable rattling paper curtains up in my room do nearly rasp the life out of me; and I've often wished for some while muslin frilled ones. If ever I had had time from helping Jane and from the stockings, I'd planned to make something pretty, if I could have learned how."

Here was a revelation to Nelly; Aunt Lavinia, the family and neighborhood stand-by in sickness or health, had cherished longings for white draperies, for picture-books and pretty

things! Aunt Lavinia went on with her homily.

"There's one thing, Nelly, that all the Prines do like, and that's books and reading. I think your pa should have bought more books and papers for you all, but he was wrestling so with that mortgage he couldn't see his way clear. If your mother had a good religious paper for Sunday, and a magazine and a book or so to take up and read a while when she's tired, I allow it would do more to rest her and keep her mind and body right than any other thing. If your pa had a good weekly and a good agricultural paper, he'd relish 'em more than plum preserves, and they'd put ideas in his head that would end by bringing him in money. Then those three brothers of yours, Nelly, would have a great deal better chance to grow up proper men if they had books of history, lives, and travels to read, and a magazine that would tell 'em how to make and do things. It's true Uncle Josiah did n't like boys, and did n't leave them a legacy, but all the same you might let them share in the benefit of yours.

"Ten years ago I lived a couple of years with Cousin Sally, and though she and Hiram were not rich, they took papers and magazines and bought books. Well, the papers and magazines and books told what to do, and how to do

it, and they kept Hiram and Sally up to date. I declare, I never saw people with such good information! They always had something to talk sensible about; and being so, they were always sought after; and being sought after, they were not bashful. The magazines and papers taught Sally how to set out and fix up the house, and decorate and furnish it on a very small margin. My! if that house did n't look pretty! When Gran'ma Prine took sick, and I came back here, it seemed for 'a while I should die of homesickness, for the house does look *peeled*, just as you say. However, here I've stayed ten years and got used to it, but I am not admiring it. Seems to me, Nelly, now you have your chance. If I were you, I'd subscribe for a religious paper and a farm paper and a young folks' paper and two or three magazines that have stories and patterns and all about dressmaking and cooking and general behavior. I'd get a book on bees and on poultry and on cattle and on horses and so on, for the boys to lay their wits to. I'd get some poetry books and some travelling books, and some illustrated books and some story books—the ones people are reading most and talking of most. I'd get some games—two or three. I've heard the boys telling of some they see—games of authors and birds and checkers and dominos—something to amuse

them now and then, and amuse your company too. After I'd got these things, I'd get a little book-case and pictures for the sitting-room; and as your papers and magazines tell how to make this, that, and the other thing for a little money, or describe a book or picture, you can buy things, and so by degrees you will find that all the house looks better and sprucer and prettier, and you will have plenty to talk about because of having given your mind something to think about.

"It would not be much pleasure to you, Nelly, to sit drumming at music, that you've got no real leaning to, while pa sleeps in his chair, and ma is tired out, and the boys complain it is dull and they wish they did n't live on a farm. But, if you could wake yourself and all the family up with right use of your legacy, giving all something to think about and something to enjoy, why I know you'd be happier and make a good use of money. If you use the legacy now, Nelly, to turn this living-place into a real attractive home, you will do more for yourself and all the rest than you can in any other way. I am not speaking for myself. I'm growing old, and I'm used to it, but I do want to see you young folks making the best of yourselves."

"You dear old soul!" cried Nelly, giving Aunt Lavinia a hug. "The very first thing I do

will be to buy checkered mull or scrim curtains for your room, and two pictures—the ones you look at whenever you go to town—and a magazine all for yourself, and three or four books for your table!”

“Land, child! don’t think of me! I can get along and enjoy what I see the rest of you enjoying. But if you take this way of using your legacy, you’ll find that in five years you have more than got all the two hundred dollars back by what you have learned to save and to do from the papers and magazines. You’ll all be dressed nicer, and have nicer things to eat, and raise more paying things, and have a prettier-looking home.”

Nelly began to look brighter at these prospects, and this encouraged Aunt Lavinia to proceed with her homily. “We are apt to forget that when God sets us in families we are bound to live for the good of the family; and then, Nelly, we’re not only families, but parts of God’s church, and we ought to fit ourselves to serve in that. What do we know about missions or Bible Societies or Tract Societies? Just nothing. We’d all brighten up on a missionary magazine and some books about missionaries for Sunday reading. I don’t believe God means us to live shut up in our little selfish interests like snails in their shells. Help the family to look out further, Nelly.”

"Yes, and one thing more we'll do, Aunt Lavinia. When we begin to fix up inside, we'll fix up outside. When I tell the boys about the books and the games, I can get them to help us make a flower garden right here in front of the house."

"I'm glad of one thing," said Aunt Lavinia, beginning on the heel of her stocking: "that two hundred dollars of Uncle Josiah's legacy is not to be tied up in a piano, kept shut up in that front room. Why, Nelly, if you use it right, not merely for self but to serve God, helping others grow, everything you buy with it will have two texts shining on it; one will be, 'No man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself,' and the other will be, 'Even Christ pleased not himself.'"

"It seems," said 'Siah Prine one day long after, "that Uncle Josiah left his legacy to educate the whole family."

Just as Mr. Glass was thanked for his reading the porters came to set the tables for dinner.

During the meal Master Martin was freely questioned about the plan for the afternoon.

"We shall be indebted to you, I am sure, for something new," said Mr. Brandt.

"It is a debt that I expect Mrs. Nugent to pay after tea," said young Martin. "I have made it clear to her that she should give us a



boys' story. We boys here are in the minority, but all you men were boys once, and I know you will enjoy the story as much as those that are boys now."

"Indeed we shall," said Mr. Brandt.

The afternoon programme, "The Boys' Matinée" as James Martin called it, was as successful as the Tableau Party given the previous day under the auspices of Miss Myrtle and Miss Catharine. The train was running pretty quietly, the performers kept in the centre of the car, and all were heard very well, though Mrs. Nugent whispered to Myrtle, "I can get out of my bargain for the evening finely, alleging that I cannot be heard in a moving train."

When the boys had finished their parts Mr. Marshall was called upon. He said, "I have just a short simple anecdote about one of my college mates, a truly manly boy. He was not ashamed of the narrow circumstances in which God had placed him; he was honest, industrious, and self-sacrificing; he was brave, because he had the good courage of a heart at peace with God and man.

"My story is of

"THE BACKWOODS STUDENT."

Ours is a college town. A handsome avenue a mile long extends from our beautiful college

building to the stately pile of the lunatic asylum. Thus across a mile of level distance these two face each other, the county court-house midway between. Of course the townspeople have their little jokes as to which act the craziest, the boys or the lunatics. It is suggested that the students are likely to drive their professors into candidacy for the beds in the asylum, and so on ; but after all, our boys are, taken as a whole, as fine manly fellows as one could wish to see.

Not so very long ago, when the college opened in the autumn, a student appeared who at once became a marked man. His coarse, ill-fitting clothes suggested home hand-make ; his shoes were of the heaviest ; his hair had been squarely cut by a woman's hand. He seemed ill at ease in his whole suit, and had the air of a youth whose regular wear had been a red flannel shirt and a pair of thick trousers tucked into his boots. Ben Perry was the stranger's name ; he sought out the cheapest boarding-house to be found, unpacked a big carpet "grip," bought his books, and set himself at what the boys called "boning," "digging," and "plugging." In other words, Ben had not a wish or idea beyond his books and his classes.

He exercised, taking long walks alone ; but while walking seemed busy with his work. Early in the morning he was at his books ; he

never went out in the evenings, never was absent or even a minute late at chapel or class; his intent eyes were fixed on his professors as they taught, and his eager ears seemed never to lose one word. The faculty wished that heaven had filled the college rolls with similar lads, and prophesied great things for uncouth Ben Perry.

But the boys laughed. At the table they said he carefully watched what other people did, and elaborately copied. He seemed learning how to use a fork and spoon and napkin, and was now and then betrayed into gulping and eating with his knife. His hostess, good soul, helped him all that she could; he won her heart by never making a noise or being late. As mid-October passed shooting began, and every holiday the students were popping at rabbits, squirrels, and quails; not to go out gunning was to be out of style indeed. Perry had joined no club, no society. His excuse when asked to do what most of the other fellows did was always the same, "I can't afford it."

One day on the campus the boys were boasting of their shooting exploits, when they began the usual teasing of Ben, urging him to hire a gun and go out for a day's hunting, daring him to do it. Ben spoke up, "Now see here, you other fellows can do all that—you have more money than I have. Most of you have fathers

with long purses. If you feel like using their money on fun, it is all right; but suppose the money you spent at college was *earned* by your mother and sisters, knitting, sewing, raising eggs and fowls, even *living out* with farmers? Suppose it was *saved* by your women-folks going without new dresses or bonnets like other women-folks? Suppose they had set all their hopes on you, and invested all their money and time and strength on you, and would n't have a future worth living unless you could give it to them? I say, which of you fellows would spend your time in fooling, or lay out the money of your women-folks in societies, entertainments, candy, oysters, powder or shot? I'm not ashamed of being poor, nor of being helped by my mother and sisters. I know if I can push on and get an education, and enter law, and make money, my folks will get back all they lay out. My mother and sisters may get back their hard work and savings some day. I mean them to wear silk gowns and ride in their own carriage yet. But I'll not come at that for them if I begin by fooling my time or money."

For a second the lads were mute. Then a leading senior held out his hand. "Perry, you're right! There is n't one of us here can hold a candle to your honest, straightforward conduct! You make us look like cads, spending our fa-

thers' money and our time the way we do! You've no need to be ashamed of what you save or what your people do for you; I'll wager the day'll come when we'll all be proud to say we ever knew you."

To this the others agreed with the cheerful frankness of lads. But one antic little "prep" must have his say, and piped out, "All the same, Perry, I'll bet you don't know how to shoot. Did you ever bring down anything?"

Perry's face kindled; thrown off his guard by the excitement of the occasion, he retorted, "Anything! I shot a b'ar and three wolves! and I got the bounty on 'em too, and it paid my railroad ticket here and bought this suit."

Now "this suit" was such a queer suit, and the phrase "shot a b'ar" was so comical, that the boys burst into a roar of laughter, and after that "Shot-a-B'ar" became their pseudonym for Ben Perry. Usually Perry was elaborately careful in his speech, having the slow precision of one accustomed to study language from books and pronunciation from dictionaries, not from daily home models.

Ben kept on his way, good humoredly answering to the name of "Shot-a-B'ar," and winning golden opinions from his professors.

The next spring strange rumors spread of a

ghost that haunted a cross-road some six miles from town at a place where an abandoned schoolhouse stood. By day it was never seen; by night it was seen and heard, a white moaning thing, by all who passed that way. Steady grown-up people, white farmers, as well as lads and negroes, saw the ghost and told the tale. Half a dozen of the boldest college lads made a night pilgrimage to the haunted spot, saw the ghost, and fled.

One day, while the ghost was under discussion on the campus, "Shot-a-B'ar" jeered at being afraid of a ghost. Would he? No, not if he knew himself! Some of the ghost-seers dared him to go alone and investigate. "You need n't cry 'I can't afford it,' 'Shot-a-B'ar;' we'll furnish the horse, any one you'll pick. Now let's see if it is true you can ride horseback; let us see if you were ever bold enough to go bear and wolf hunting. Try it!"

"Very well," said "Shot-a-B'ar," "if you'll set up the horse, I'll throw in the time, and you can see me off to-night at nine."

Six lads arranged to accompany Perry to within a mile of "the haunted corner," to see that he did his duty. To their surprise he chose a noble-spirited horse that not another lad dared bestride, saddled him himself, and leaping on his back, lo! the ungainly "Shot-a-B'ar" rode

like a knight of the olden time, gathered splendid grace from his steed, and performed horsemanship feats that amazed them all.

Dismissed by his companions five miles from town, "Shot-a-B'ar" rode on through the night to the haunted corners. He was thinking of home, forgetting his errand and the ghost, when a low, moaning cry struck his ears, and up the road before him, in dizzy circles, wailing and waving white arms and white robes, ran the ghost! "Shot-a-B'ar" drew rein; the horse shivered and gave a neigh and stood still. Around, about, in and out of the woody shelters, ran the gesticulating white thing, shrieking to the night.

"Shot-a-B'ar" wondered and shivered and felt eerie, but urged his horse closer, closer. Suddenly the ghost stood above him—above the road, uplifted on something—it might be a stump or rock. With a bold dash "Shot-a-B'ar" sprang close, spurring his horse to the very feet of the ghost. Then with a cry the ghost leaped behind him, clasped him fast, sat like black care on the crupper, and a cold face rested against the lad's neck and a wild voice moaned in his ears.

One arm "Shot-a-B'ar" threw back and held the ghost fast: then he gave rein to the horse and darted down the road. On, on, towards the

town. The waiting lads heard him come; they saw him pass them like a flash, some great white thing sharing with him the flying horse. They heard him cry, "Come home, I've got the ghost!" They came—at a safe distance!

On, on rode "Shot-a-B'ar;" the others followed just within hearing, into town, through the town to the asylum gate, where "Shot-a-B'ar" shouted long and loud, and gave into the hands of the physicians—an escaped mad woman. "Shot-a-B'ar" had vindicated his courage and caught the ghost!

The hearers clapped their hands in honor of the Backwoods Boy.

"Mr. Marshall!" cried Myrtle, "how long ago was that, please?"

"Ten years."

"And what has become of your hero?"

"He finished his college course with first honors; then he spent three years in a law school, taking high rank. He then entered the practice of law in a city, being given a good position in a well-established firm. He has practised three years and is doing well. His mother and sister live with him. I called on them a month ago. They have a little cosey five-roomed flat, tastefully furnished and marvellously home-like. The sister has learned typewriting and



stenography, and is in the same office as her brother. The good mother keeps the house and her last days are shining as her best days. She is a plain, uneducated, godly woman; of one thing you may be sure, neither her son nor daughter esteem her less than the very highest lady in the land."

## CHAPTER VIII.

IT is far from easy to circumvent an active boy. When Mrs. Nugent made it clear to Martin that as the train rattled on its way she could not be heard telling a story, he said, "That is all right. The story is for us boys. There are only three of us, for of course the Italian could not understand you. We three can come here in your section, on one seat, and if the three girls can get close enough to hear, all right. You will tell the story to us, and the other folks will be unfortunate, that is all."

As he was so persistent, Mrs. Nugent yielded. "I have," she said, "in manuscript, the story of a boy from Denmark who was on the ship 'Denmark' in its wonderful voyage. I have written out the story as nearly as I could as he told it to me a year ago. Gorg Heitzen his name is, and he is a truly good and noble boy. I am proud to count him as one of my friends. I heard only a day or two ago, from the teacher of the public school to which Gorg was sent, that his greedy old uncle had died, and that the money was left to Gorg as the only heir. It has been money badly gathered, with a

curse on it, as we say, but I am sure the curse will be changed to a blessing by the use that Gorg will make of his money for the service of God and the good of men. Of course he will now be sent to some first-class school, and will be well educated for business or a profession. I hope to hear from him now and then, for he is one to make a good honest record in the world, and I shall watch his course with interest. I hope the noise of the car will not prevent your hearing about ✓

“ONE WRECKED ON THE ‘DENMARK.’”

“Yes, that’s my name, Gorg Heitzen. I’m fourteen, past. My father? I had one of course, as all boys do, but mine died when I was a week old, and I seemed to forget him, you know. I had a mother. Oh she was the best! We lived at Praesto. Did I have a good time? Of course I did. Do n’t any boy have a good time living with his mother? My first trouble was when my mother died. I was n’t quite thirteen. She sent for Uncle Heitzen and asked him to be a father to me. He said he would. He did n’t look like a man to be much of a father to any one. I was afraid of him. The night before my mother died she talked to me alone, about how I was to behave and be good all my life. She took out from under her pillow a little

leather purse. It had two big gold-pieces in it and one little one and a rix-dollar. She told me to tie the bag about my neck, and only use the money if I was in great need. I think she too felt afraid of my uncle. Then she kissed me and prayed for me. I suppose I'm too big to cry, being fourteen, and having been shipwrecked. But I always cry when I think of my mother.

"After mother was buried, Uncle Heitzen sold all our things. He got forty-six dollars for them, but I never had any of it. I ate breakfast with a neighbor the day we started for Korsor, and that was the last real meal I had for a year.

"Uncle Heitzen's house in Korsor was a big shut-up place, three stories tall. He lived there alone with his cat—a brindle cat with great green eyes. My uncle's business was buying and selling old things. You never saw such queer things—old dishes and furniture, old clothes of velvet and silk, rags of lace, old money, old cups and plates of silver and gold, carved chests, old pictures, and jewelry, weapons, suits of armor. Monthly he sent them to be sold in London or Paris, and English and Americans paid a lot of money for them. I used to think that English and Americans had money to waste, the way they gave it for

cracked china, and old black pictures, and cupboards full of worm-holes, and coin you could n't spend, and clothes you could n't wear. I don't believe in throwing money away like that.

"Uncle kept me busy cleaning and moving and mending and polishing old things and writing lists. Hardly a bit of light in that house. Uncle never burned any light but an old lantern he carried about when he wanted to find things. He said lights were 'wasteful and dangerous.' Same with fire. He hardly had a spark. I nearly froze! He said if I felt cold I could wrap some of the old curtains about me. Fire, he said, was 'wasteful and dangerous.' I slept in the garret on a pile of old things. Water did n't cost anything, and he let me have all I wanted of that. He did n't let me go to school nor to church, as mother told me to. He kept the door locked and never let me go out, except to the baker's for stale bread now and then. He kept the bread until it was dry as a bone or had green streaks in it. When he went away he left me locked in the house--me and the poor cat.

"Sometimes it seemed to me as if God never looked at that house, but now I know he did all the time.

"The worst of all was having nothing to eat. Did you ever try that? It makes you feel all

hollow round your waist, and kind of dizzy in your head and shaky in your legs. It helps a little if you tie something round your body very tight. Three times a day uncle cut off a slice of bread and gave it to me, and told me to drink all the water I wanted. It was such a little bit of bread! I felt as if I had swallowed a breath of air when I ate it! The worst was to see the way the cat watched me eat. She got less than I did. Her bones stuck out so you could count 'em. I told uncle it was wicked to starve the cat, but he said that to feed cats was 'wasteful and dangerous.' If the cat was fed, she would n't catch mice and rats. But don't you see, she could n't catch 'em anyhow; there were n't any there. They wont live in a house where there is n't a crumb to eat; you see they know better. I got so starved I could have eaten the cat if there 'd been anything of her to eat but bones and skin. I suppose she thought just so about me. Any ways I was afraid to have her in my room at night. She looked so ravenous, I was afraid she'd forget herself and I'd wake up and find a piece of me gone. She seemed to like me. I gave her some of my bread, she looked so dreadful out of her eyes. I guess the baker's wife felt so about me, for she got to giving me crusts and rolls, and I hid 'em and shared with the cat.

“At last I gave the baker my dollar to give me extra bread as long as it would pay for it, for I thought I should die, and it made me cry at night to think how bad mother would feel if she knew. But they don't know such things up in heaven, do they? Mother had told me to stay with uncle and be good. I wanted to, truly I did; but sometimes, no matter how hard you want, you can't, things go so! At last I concluded I must run away. I knew mother did not want me to stay and never learn a thing. Uncle was off for four days. The first night I took a thick silk sash and tied it to a bronze truncheon laid across my garret window. There is a tree a little way off, and I meant to push my feet against the wall, and so swing out until I caught hold of the tree limbs. Just as I was getting out of the window, the cat came up and cried so I could n't leave her. I had to take her, you see. If I'd left her to starve, I'd heard her 'miauls' as long as I live, would n't I? I buttoned her inside my jacket. It was the same mother had got me. If mother had lived that jacket would have been too small for me; but my uncle gave me so little to eat that the jacket grew bigger and bigger and bigger all the time. It was big enough for me and the cat too.

“Well, I took the cat and swung into the tree. Then I got to the ground and ran out of

Korsør town as fast as ever I could. I meant to go to Copenhagen and look for work. I was so weak I could not go very fast. Next morning I saw a kind-faced woman milking a cow. I asked her if she would keep my cat. I told her it was a starved cat, but it made me so tired to carry it. The woman said I looked as starved as the cat. She said to come in and have some breakfast, and she would keep the cat. I had such a breakfast—milk, meat, and potatoes! The woman gave me a fine bag of food and told me the road to Copenhagen. I was a whole week walking alone, and I was cold and scared and hungry. I had lots of trouble. It's no good, is it, to fret over trouble that is done? One day I felt so bad I got behind a hedge to cry, and I asked God to help me. I heard some one coming. I looked through the hedge; I knew him. I ran out calling, 'Zander! O Zander! Don't you know me! I'm Gorg Heitzen!' He was from Praesto. He just sat down and took me on his knee like I was a little boy, and I told him about uncle, the starving, and the brindle cat, and all. Zander said to come with him; he was going to Copenhagen to sail for America. He had a brother, Eric Schen, who had gone to America and bought a farm in Missouri, a State four times as big as Denmark, though it is only a little



piece of America. Zander said it was almost never cold there, and fruit and grain grew like miracles, and no one was poor. So Zander was going to help Eric to farm, and he was to take over Gretchen Peterson. She was waiting in Copenhagen and was to marry Eric. While Eric earned his farm, for three years, Gretchen had earned her wedding clothes and house plenishing. She had two big chests full.

"Zander said to me to come too. We would sail in the ship 'Denmark.' I showed him my gold. He said God had put it in mother's mind to provide for me. The gold would buy my outfit and pay my tickets. We sailed from Copenhagen in the big ship 'Denmark;' seven hundred emigrants bound for the happy land of America. I was glad! Every one was so kind to me. I had warm clothes and all I wanted to eat. I began to fill up my jacket and did n't feel queer round my waist.

"You never saw such a nice girl as Gretchen, nor so pretty, nor a nicer man than Zander. I don't know why every one on the ship liked me, but they did. Gretchen and I were never sick, and we took care of the sick ones and of the babies. The man down in the engine-room, Mr. Haas, was kind to me. He let me sit on a timber and look in at him through a let-down window of the engine-room. It was the fourth

of April I was there, and Mr. Haas had just said something of 'home,' when there was an awful noise, and the first thing I knew I did n't know anything; and when I did know something, I was lying 'tween decks, and Gretchen was crying and bathing my head, and every one seemed frightened. Zander told me an engine pipe had burst and killed Mr. Haas, and knocked me down and others; the shaft of our ship was broken, and she could n't go any more. She just rolled on the water. 'Sha' n't we ever get to America?' 'Yes,' Gretchen said; 'the good God will send a ship to help us.'

"About two hours after, I sat up and saw them bury Mr. Haas. He was all rolled up in some sail-cloth. They made a prayer over him and dropped him in the sea. I cried.

"It seemed as if all the people I cared for died. My father was dead, and my mother, and Mr. Haas. Gretchen said I should be thankful that they all loved God and were safe in heaven; and then when I got there too, I'd have all my friends about me. Do you know, I wondered then that I had never thought much about Mr. Haas being such a good Christian? I knew that he was: he often talked to me about my duty to God and the love of Christ; and now all at once that he was dead, it seemed that that was the one great best thing of all about him! Seems

strange, don't it, that we don't value people's religion so much until they're dead? I said something like that to our Danish pastor, who was on the ship, going to Dakota with a many of his people. He told me religion was a thing to live by as well as die by; and it was only by living it that we showed we had enough to die by.

"Our pastor got us steerage people all together and read Scripture to us. I remember the reading began, 'Out of the depths have I cried unto thee; Lord, hear my voice.' Then he had a prayer with us. After that I cried more, thinking of Mr. Haas' body rolling about in the water. But Zander said to me that it was promised 'the sea shall give up its dead,' and that Mr. Haas would rise at last, the same as the rest of God's people. Then Gretchen sang a hymn how God holds the waters in the hollow of his hand, and Mrs. Linnie repeated verses, that those who go down to the sea in ships see the goodness of God and his wonders in the deep.

"We all felt pretty bad that night. Next day about noon we saw a line of smoke in the sky. By-and-by a big ship coming from London hove in sight. We had a distress flag flying, and the London ship talked to us. Did you know that at sea ships talk by flags? Our Capt.

Knudson asked the other captain to take us aboard. Capt. Murrell said his ship could n't hold so many people, but he would give us a rope and tow us to Newfoundland. It was awful queer to see them give us that rope and then drag us along through the sea, as I used to drag my sled in Praesto. They dragged us over a day. All we did was to look at the big ship 'Missouri' drag us. Gretchen said it was queer the ship was named the 'Missouri,' and we were going to Missouri.

"There was a big wind against us. Then we saw mountains and sheets of ice shining in our path. So the ships talked more with flags. Capt. Murrell's flag said 'I'll have to take you to the Azores,' and our flag said 'All right.' The Azores, you know, are islands owned by Portugal.

"Early next day we had great trouble. The water was coming into our ship. Some of the people cried, some prayed. Gretchen hid her face in her lap and said, 'Oh, my poor dear Eric!' Our flag said to the 'Missouri,' 'We are leaking badly.' 'What shall we do?' said the other flag. 'Keep on towing,' our flag answered. That was at seven in the morning. At nine, our flag told the other one, 'We are sinking. Can you take us aboard?' And the brave Capt. Murrell said, 'Yes, I will.' So they cast off their tow-line, and both ships got out their boats. The sun shone,

but the sea rolled great swells like hills. You know there were 738 people on the 'Denmark.' It took us five hours to get all aboard the 'Missouri.' The women and children went first, then the men, then the sailors. Last of all, Capt. Murrell said to Capt. Knudson and his officers, 'Come now, or you will go down,' and they came in the last boat. I went with Gretchen. Zander was the last of the passengers to leave the 'Denmark.'

"Oh, but the 'Missouri' was full! They had to tumble a lot of her cargo over, to make room for us to lie or sit on deck. Then an awful storm came on. The waves broke over us. Some said we were lost. I didn't feel so very afraid. I've no people in this world, as the rest had, and if I'd drowned I'd have gone to my mother. Any boy would like that, you know. The captain spread sails over us to keep us dry. We had n't much to eat. I stayed in the cabin most of the time, because I could keep my legs, and they wanted me to take care of a baby. Mrs. Linnie was Gretchen's schoolmate, and the baby was born in the storm, half a day after we got on the 'Missouri.' It was the prettiest baby ever you saw! They wrapped her in a shawl and gave her to me. They named her 'Atlantic Missouri.' I thought it a queer name; but it didn't seem to hurt her. She grew splendid. She never

cried, but I thought she laughed. Zander said it was colic. Perhaps it was.

“In five days we got to St. Michael’s of the Azores. We were pretty worn out and hungry. St. Michael’s is the hottest place I ever was in. We sailed for Philadelphia that same evening. We had got plenty to eat. We left 370 of our ‘Denmark’ people, and fifty officers and crew, at St. Michael’s to come on another ship. We all felt very happy. The weather was fine and Capt. Murrell was so kind. He is the best man I know, except Capt. Knudson and Zander and Eric, and Mr. Haas that was killed, and a few more. We got to Philadelphia in eleven days. You never saw such a fuss as they made over us! They waved, they shouted, the boats and tugs blew steam off; folks cried and laughed and laughed, all because they were saved. Gretchen said it made her think of when the prodigal son came home, and of what the Bible says about joy in heaven. Do you suppose my mother is glad?

“Everybody wanted to hug everybody, whether they knew them or not. I think Capt. Murrell must have felt glad to have saved over 700 people, do n’t you? Eric met us, and Mrs. Linnie’s husband, and we laughed like we were crazy, and we cried—rivers. Why do people both cry and laugh when they are glad? Then

Eric took Gretchen and me and Zander to a little church, and the Danish pastor married Eric and Gretchen. Gretchen cried some, because her wedding-clothes and house plenishing were lost. Eric said he felt rich as a king just getting her. Gretchen had n't even her wedding-gown. We could n't carry much aboard the 'Missouri;' and Gretchen had to take things for Mrs. Linnie. You know you could n't leave a baby without any clothes. Besides all our chests were under water.

"Well, then we got on the cars and came out here to Missouri. Eric had a nice little home and a mule team, and chickens and a cow, and all the fruit trees are in bloom. I live with them. I help on the farm, and I go to school. They are all good to me. The Thingvalle Company will pay for our goods, they say. But Gretchen says nothing will pay her for the things she earned herself, and for the stitches all the dear home folks knit and set.

"I like America. I am glad you understand Danish, for I can only speak a little English yet. Zander has written to the Mayor of Korsor to keep me in mind, for he says when Uncle Heitzen dies I am to have his money; for I am the only relation. I do n't want his money; I can earn some. I hope he wont die, for he never says his prayers, and I am afraid he

wouldn't go to heaven. I'm glad you're interested in my talk, but I don't see how you can call it a story. Stories are printed, and about heroes, you know. But this is only what happened to me, and I am only Gorg Heitzen."



## CHAPTER IX.

THE next morning all seemed to be going well with the belated train which was hastening on its way, the hopes of the passengers rising in prospect of reaching their respective destinations somewhere in the near future.

"We shall be sorry to part," said Catharine to Myrtle; "people travelling together become wonderfully friendly in a short time, if they are at all congenial. I shall remember my friends of the Cadmus all my life."

"We must not lose sight of each other," said Myrtle; "let us write to each other. I shall like so much to hear of your progress in college, and when you graduate I shall be very proud of your distinguished scholarship. Perhaps, as your friends are so far West, you may come and spend some vacations with me at Mrs. Nugent's. She is always holding fast to friends. All those who were strangers when we started will not drift apart for the rest of their lives, I think. Miss Lossing expects to adopt those two dear little girls, if their friends shall be willing; and Miss Matlack is going to live with Miss Lossing as a sort of housekeeper or head servant. I

heard Miss Lossing urging Mrs. Nugent to spend a fortnight with her at her country home on the Delaware next summer, so we are likely to keep her in view."

"That will be nice," said Catharine. "I like—why, something must have happened! Here we are stopping, and not a house in sight! More snow?"

The gentlemen in the car seemed equally interested. They all hurried out to reconnoitre.

"What is it?" cried the other passengers when they returned.

"More trouble! We're doomed, it seems," said Mr. Glass, shrugging his shoulders; "this engine has broken down."

"But the top of the snow on each side of the track is as hard as ice and smooth as can be," said Mr. Marshall. "The Transformation Man is a fine skater, it seems, and as I had a pair of skates in my trunk, he is skating off on them for the next station, ten miles away, and an engine will be sent out to us. We are fortunate in having that good, willing fellow with us."

"What should we do without our Transformation Man!" cried Mr. Glass. "He is worthy of better fates."

"So he is," said Mr. Brandt heartily. "I have had considerable conversation with him. He was formerly in another line of life, but un-



*On a Snow-bound Train. Page 160.*



happily he began to drink, and lost his position, without a character. He has been reformed through the work of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and for two years has been entirely temperate. I am sure he will keep on temperate to the end. But he has not found it easy to make a living, to get wages enough to support himself and a little crippled nephew, so he has kept up this 'transformation and funny-man' business. When he gets to Chicago he will find that he has lost his position at the Varieties by being behind time. He and I will not regret that, for I mean to give him a fair position under me, with a chance to rise if he holds out well."

"So there is one more," said Mrs. Nugent, "for whom this delay in the snow has proved a blessing."

"As we are again at rest on the track," said Mr. Glass, "we all want to hear a story."

"I have a friend," said Miss Lossing, "a lady living in Virginia. She wrote me the story of part of her life to draw my thoughts from myself when she knew that I was very sad and lonely. The story is very plainly written, and I took it from my trunk when I brought out the fruit-cake. I thought we might be glad to hear it in some waiting hour. If Mr. Glass will kindly read it, I will pass it over to him."

"With pleasure, if you are not tired of my reading," said Mr. Glass, taking the manuscript.

"Nonsense, Glass, are you fishing for a compliment?" said Mr. Marshall. "You know that you are a very superior reader, and that no one could ever tire of hearing you."

"Thanks awfully," said Mr. Glass with a grimace; "now I have caught the compliment for which I was fishing, and my mind is quite at rest. This manuscript is so beautifully legible it is a pleasure to read it. Is it quite true, do you say, Miss Lossing?"

"Yes: it is a part of the history of my friend who is one of the most gracious and intelligent women that I ever saw. I have told her that I meant to have her story printed in some paper, but I have never done so. I think the reading of it in this case will be its only publication. I know that when I write to her that her little narrative helped to beguile our hours of waiting, she will be much pleased. She is one of the Abou Ben Adhem people, living to bless whoever is in need of blessing."

"How many delightful people there are in the world!" said Mr. Glass. "Now listen, all of you, to the story of

"DICK, I, AND THE CHILDREN."

Shortly after the close of the war Dick and I

were left without parents or property, and with the two children to care for. "The children" were, Rob, aged seventeen, and Isa, fourteen. Robert was all ready for college, a noble, studious boy, unusually eloquent and full of zeal for that profession of law in which he has since distinguished himself. Isa was thoroughly artistic in all her tastes, eager to devote herself to drawing and painting. Now-a-days many books and magazines are graced with Isa's illustrations, and I am very proud of my gifted sister.

Dick and I were most anxious that the plans our parents had made for Rob and Isa should be carried out. Their plans for us had been thwarted by the misfortunes of war-time. I was twenty-two and Dick was twenty-five. We could not go to college, for the burdens of life rested upon us, but we wanted "the children" to have all that we had missed. I think we four belonged constitutionally to what is now called "the new South." We were not afraid of work; we had no shame of self-support; we esteemed intellectual culture as next to godliness the most desirable of possessions; our natures, like Damascus blades, had grown both tough and supple in the fiery times through which we had passed. Although our parents, once rich, had left us nothing of worldly goods,

we had received from them what was much better, careful religious training, a habit of daily childlike reliance upon God for all things that we needed, that filial feeling which is locked up in the word of our Lord—"Your Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." I think it was this that kept us from fear, anxiety, or any feeling of abasement in our poverty: our circumstances were ordained for us by the good All-Father, he would bear us through. We did not lose a night's sleep worrying about bread, butter, and shelter; we left all that to our Father; our part was to listen for his voice behind us saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." I think a childlike trust of that kind is the true root of happiness.

God was very good to us; his providence was a daily miracle. As I look back now I wonder at the wonderful ways in which he supplied all our needs. It seems strange that we were not more surprised at them. But then children are never surprised at the loving-kindness of a good father. They expect him to be able and willing to do all things for them. Almost immediately I was bequeathed a moderate sum, which with strict care would be enough to send Rob through college and law-school and give Isa four years in a conservatory; possibly, if we were all very saving, even a year of study in



Europe! Accordingly, that they might be near together in their exile, Robert was sent to Harvard and Isa to Boston. They were not to come home for two years; we could not afford travelling expenses. Isa was to spend the long vacation with a friend near Boston, and Rob esteemed himself happy to have a promise of a position in a summer school among the White Mountains.

Dick had a book-keeper's position in Richmond. The salary was small, but we made it do for us two. We had a tiny house in the outskirts, where I devoted myself to making "two ends meet." No one was with us but our old black mammy who clung to us in our fallen fortunes. The children had been gone a little over a year when Dick was taken very ill with fever. During his three months' sickness all our tiny savings vanished. Worse than that, the doctors said Dick was unfit for indoor work, and his only hope of vigorous health rested in out-of-door occupation. "Get a plantation and run it, my lad," said the doctor; "you cannot go back to a desk." What hard, expensive prescriptions these doctors give! A plantation! And we had not fifty dollars in the world!

But God was still very good to us. The first day Dick was able to take a long walk he met old Col. Gresham, our mamma's father's

friend, whom we had not seen for years. Dick brought him home to our simple little dinner, and at the table we discussed our fortunes and misfortunes. The colonel wanted to know all about us.

"See here, Dick," said the colonel, "do you remember my plantation near ——? The Tulip Tree plantation?"

"Indeed I do!" cried Dick; "it is a noble old place."

"You can have that," said the colonel, "if you are not afraid of ghosts."

I burst into a laugh. "Ghosts, colonel! I thought ghosts were all out of fashion in the nineteenth century."

"What I should be afraid of, colonel," said Dick, "would be that I could not, in my inexperience, make enough to pay you a proper rental for the 'Tulip Tree.' That place should bring you in a handsome sum."

"It has not brought me a dime since a year before the close of the war," said the colonel. "I am sure I don't know what is wrong with the place. They say it is haunted. I don't believe in such tales, but there is something queer. I have had five or six tenants in there, and the boldest of them wont remain a week. There is n't a negro in the county will stay in the house after twilight. There are plenty of negroes there

at the quarters, for the quarters have not been molested. There is a strange, wild, wailing sound all through the house most of the time. I can't trace it up, and I've tried my best. Then at night there is a great clashing and din—shutters opened, doors opened, furniture upset. I went there for a fortnight to try to ferret it out, and I could n't and had to come away. Old folks need their sleep, you know, and I could n't get a wink. There's Simon Coles, who owns the next plantation, has been after me since before the war to sell him Tulip Tree at about half what it is worth. The other day he met me, and with that hateful leer of his, which made me long to give him a cut with my whip, he offered me about half what he did in the first place. He said, 'You'd better take it, Gresham; haunted houses have no market-value, and before long Tulip Tree will have such a name you can't get rid of it as a gift.' I declare," added the colonel, bringing down his fist on the table, "I told Coles I'd starve before I'd let him have Tulip Tree at any of his greedy figures; and if I could n't do anything with it, I'd keep it for my burial place. But I can tell you, Dick, if you and Hilda could go out there and exorcise the ghosts, and bring that place up to what it used to be, you can have it rent free for five years, and my best thanks in the bargain. There is con-

siderable handsome old furniture out there, and with what you have here you could be quite comfortable."

"The occasion of the manifestations out there," said Dick, laughing, "must be either man, the forces of nature, or spirits. If it is man, I have a good pair of fists and a good revolver; if the forces of nature are concerned, they should be harmonized with humanity in some way; and as to spirits, I really think they have some better occupations than tormenting a couple of well-conducted young people who are trying to make a living. What do you say, Hilda?"

"I say let us go to Tulip Tree and make our fortune," I replied.

That evening I frankly told mammy our plan, and what Col. Gresham had said about the plantation home. After an hour spent in tearful entreaties to us to reconsider our intentions, old mammy said heroically, "Well, den, chil'luns, I'll go 'long and die wid yo'. W'at ole mammy lef' in this worl' but you uns?" But when we reached the Tulip Tree, and mammy had heard the peculiar wailing in the house and the tales of the negroes at the quarters, she changed her mind. She refused to sleep outside of the quarters. "'T a'n't as yo' mammy is 'fraid ob dyin', chile," she explained; "we's all got to

die some time honey; but what I 'jects to is gobbleans, w'at carries yo' off body an' so'l. Dere's Scripture fer dat, honey. Uncle Jake 'splained it to we uns at the quarters. It says, 'Fear not dem dat kill de body, and cy'ant do no more; but fear de gobbleans w'at can kerry bof so'l an' body off to de bad place.'"

Dick laughed a little when I told him what our mammy had said. Then he cried out, "I wonder how many generations it will be before these poor creatures get over their superstition and fetich worship! They distort their Bibles to read into them their own paganism. I can tell you, Hilda, that we owe it to these poor ignorant folks at the quarters to live this mystery here down. We must let them see that we are made brave by our religion. We will tell them that we feel that God has brought us here, and that we trust him to take care of us here. It may be a good opportunity to let them know that sin is the one thing to be feared. Poor old Uncle Jake, he is n't a particle afraid to tell a lie or steal a chicken or a sack of flour, but a ghost has awful terrors for him!"

However, as goblins are supposed to be less dangerous in the daytime, mammy, reinforced by Casinda, a stout, jolly black girl who considered housework much easier and "mo' 'spec-

table " than field-work, came to the house at sunrise and left for the quarters at sunset.

We found all that the colonel had said true, and quite as inexplicable as he had found it. The wild, continuous wailing sound filled the house nearly all the time, now low, now high, now falling to a sob or moan, sometimes in still, hot noons coming to an entire pause. We soon became used to it. I even found some of the tones of our mysterious music beautiful.

The uproar at nights was most dreadful, and we wore ourselves out trying to discover the cause of it. If we watched all night there was less of it, and usually it began after we were asleep. But Dick and I were young and active and hearty; we had buoyant dispositions and calm consciences, and we soon took the part of sleeping unconcernedly through the riot. We locked each our outer door, and left the middle door closed, but not locked. When Dick shut that door for the night, as we entered our rooms, he would say, "Well, sister, sound rest to you, and let the witches have their holiday to themselves." Then each of us laid a revolver on the table near the bed, and if a great crash awoke us we fell asleep waiting for the next one. Some way we were not constituted to be afraid of ghosts.

Still I do not wish to seem braver than I

really was. There were many nights when I was obliged to repeat all the hymns and all the texts of Scripture that I knew before I could fall asleep. I remember how much comfort I got out of that verse, "The darkness and the night are both alike to Thee." And I think that every morning my first waking thought was the text, "I laid me down in peace and slept; I awaked, for the Lord sustained me." I remember also that I took a large sheet of Bristol board and illuminated on it a verse that had always been a favorite with my mother, and which she had often quoted during our troubled war-times:

" Though the night be dark and dreary,  
Darkness cannot hide from Thee;  
Thou art He who, never weary,  
Watches where Thy people be."

I often noticed that Dick, lamp in hand, stopped to read that verse as he left me for the night.

Dick developed splendid qualities as a plantation manager, and we were speedily bringing the Tulip Tree back to its ancient order and beauty. We went there in February. The first of July "the children" were coming home for their holiday: Dick went to the station, six miles off, to meet them. I stayed at home to see that a grand supper was provided. But the sun set, and Dick did not come back. My black henchwomen could not be persuaded to wait a

moment longer. After vainly begging me to fly with them to the quarters, they, weeping, left me to my fate. The ghostly music was particularly loud. I think the "ghosts" had never made me so nervous as on that evening. Probably it was because of the excitement of my feelings in anticipation of the dear children's return and the fears I began to have because of the delay. I read five or six chapters in my Bible, and prayed for some time, and still that nervous excitement continued. I began to pace the floor, telling myself that this was no time for courage to fail. God had led me to that very hour and place, and had his own plans in it all. That lovely and pathetic verse of the Psalm came flashing to me: "Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother, my soul is even as a weaned child." It brought me a sudden peace and calm; I felt like a child at rest.

I locked up the house, lit my lamp, and laid my revolver, a small one, beside me on the reading table. I was very much alarmed, not for myself or because of ghosts, but lest some accident had befallen the train or the carriage. The room across the hall from my sitting-room was large and little used; it was the chief scene of the ghostly manifestations. About ten o'clock a great uproar began there — clash!



bang! Some way it infuriated me in my nervous state.

"I'll be even with that ghost, at least!" I cried angrily, and catching up my lamp and taking my revolver, I went across the hall. The room door had a latch, and I opened it with my left hand, which held the lamp. A fierce gust from somewhere blew the lamp out just as I made a forward step and stumbled upon an overturned arm-chair. The lamp fell from my hand; as it fell I struck out wildly in the darkness and my groping hand came in contact with another hand, not ghostly, but human flesh and blood. I grasped it close. It was jerked from me, but as this was done I fired my revolver, almost mechanically, towards where this thing that I had grasped must be. Simultaneously came the report of the revolver, a cry, a blow on my head, and I fell.

It could have been but a very few minutes before I revived, rose from the floor, and somewhat dizzily recrossed to my sitting-room for another lamp that yet burned there. I still held my revolver.

Returned to the "haunted room," I found the furniture all overthrown and flung about, the lamp I had first carried broken, the oil drenching the white matting, and with and beyond the oil—a trail of blood.

"Ghosts do n't have red blood," I said, and returned to the sitting-room, locked myself in, and renovated my appearance. There was a sound of wheels and dearly loved voices. I rushed out. There were Dick, Rob, Isa, all safe and sound. The train had been four hours late. My adventures formed the theme of our tea-table talk.

I have heard dear Dick very fervent and spiritual in prayer often, for he has "a gift" in prayer, but it seemed as if his words never came more from the heart than on that night of our family reunion. After prayers we sat late about the fireplace, talking of all that had happened since we parted. The night had turned chilly and stormy, but it did not seem so to us.

Rob had leisure and a spirit of investigation. Within a fortnight he had unravelled much of our ghost mystery. The blood tracks led up to a neatly concealed trap in the floor of the big room, which trap opened into a trench leading out of doors and hidden in some bushes. Here our molesting ghosts had come and gone. The wailing, musical sounds were made by three or four pipes and part of an old organ that had been put within the wainscoting at the head of the stairs.

Two years after that I was sent for to Simon Coles, who was dying. He told me that, resolved to make Col. Gresham sell him the Tulip Tree at

less than its worth, he had seized a time when it was empty and by a few nights' work arranged the organ pipes and made the trap and the trench. These, aided by a little quickness and the help of a nephew as bad as himself, provided all that was needed to "haunt" the house. My shot had disabled Coles, cutting a sinew in his leg and laming him, and then Rob had closed up the trap and trenches.

Col. Gresham was a happy man when the mystery was unravelled. He died soon after Simon Coles, and willed the Tulip Tree to me, because I "had given away all my first inheritance to the children, and had 'shot the ghost.'" By the time I married, Dick was able to buy the Coles plantation of the renegade nephew, and there he lives very happily with his family. My children have been brought up in our "haunted house."

## CHAPTER X.

NIGHT fell while the train still waited for an engine. No one felt like going to sleep until the cars were once more under way. The three girls, Myrtle, Catharine, and little Miss Martin, came to Mrs. Nugent. "Last evening you told the boys an especial story," said Miss Martin; "we want you to tell us girls one to-night. The boys are busy playing at a Chinese puzzle; tell us something for girls, about a girl."

"Let us have a conversational story," said Myrtle; "I like those."

"I don't quite understand what you mean by a conversational story," said Catharine.

"It is one that we can all enter into. You will see how it goes when once we begin. Whose story will you tell us, Mrs. Nugent?"

"The story of a girl whom I know. Her name was Miss Morrison. She was born in Boston, on Commonwealth Avenue. Her mother was beautiful and very fond of society, a leader of fashion; her father was a millionaire and very anxious to get as many millions more as possible; he was at his counting-house or off on business trips from morning until night. Miss

Morrison sometimes saw her father on Sunday, but that scarcely gave her time to get acquainted with him. She drove in the suburbs with him now and then on pleasant evenings in early summer; but while they were driving he was generally too much occupied thinking about the money he was laying up for his only child to pay much attention to the child herself. Miss Morrison was sometimes taken down to the drawing-room to show off, on the days when her mother was at home to receive callers. Unfortunately while her dress was a magnificent display, and so was her Paris doll, the child herself did not show off well; she fell into tempers and the French *bonne* carried her away. Miss Morrison also went out to drive with her mother, and sometimes ate luncheon with her, and now and then Mrs. Morrison came up to the nursery and held her child on her lap for a few minutes or even put her to bed, on which occasion she taught her to say her prayers. The *bonne* now and then remembered the prayers, to which she added a 'Hail Mary.' Usually Mrs. Morrison spent the evening in dressing for the opera, or a ball or reception, to which she went late, and coming home very early in the morning, she needed to sleep until noon; so after all, the time she had to spare for her daughter was little indeed. On the other hand, Miss Morrison had a French *bonne*, a

nursery full of toys, unlimited luxuries in food and dress, and was daily taken out to have a drive or to walk on the avenue or in the Public Gardens. What more do you think she wanted?"

"What was she taught?" demanded Catharine.

"A little French by her *bonne*; a governess succeeded in teaching her to read and write; she went now and then, when she was willing, to a Kindergarten, and after a while to a French and English school for young ladies, where she was taught her scales, the multiplication-tables, and some geography and French verbs."

"I think she needed much more instruction," said Catharine severely. "The first seven years of a child's life are the formative years, and in them should be laid the principles, the habits of study and industry, and the religious thought, that shall direct the life. All her riches and luxuries could not make up for that lack."

"I think a poor child that was cared for by its mother and was taught and helped by her and lived with her—a child that knew intimately its father, learned from him, associated with him, had home and family feeling—would have been much better off than this Miss Morrison in her neglected splendors," cried Miss Martin.

"I don't envy the life of city children, rich

or poor," said Myrtle; "the country is the natural home for a child. All the French dolls and expensive toys were not worth so much to Miss Morrison as a chance to keep rabbits and pigeons, to feed a yard-full of chickens, to own a pair of goats and a little goat-cart, to have a dog and a cosset-lamb and a pet pony. A child that can run in the fields and woods, build dams in little streams, dig in the ground, make its own garden, pick wild flowers and gather nuts and berries, is much better off than the most luxuriously attended city child. I don't think this Miss Morrison was so very fortunate."

"How long did affairs go on in this way?" asked Catharine.

"For thirteen years," continued Mrs. Nugent, "Miss Morrison lived in the city in the winter and went to Saratoga, Newport, and Niagara Falls in the summers.

"Mamma Morrison discovered that at thirteen years old her daughter was growing upward to young ladyhood, and there was a change of *regime*. The *bonne* was dismissed, a governess was engaged, Miss Morrison was forced to practise two hours daily, and was drilled in French and German. She also read what novels she chose, making her own selection. Her childish toys were put into the garret. Miss Morrison learned to play cards, her hair was done up

higher, and her gowns were lengthened. She was taken not only to concerts, but to the opera and theatre, 'to educate her taste.' As for dress, Miss Morrison was the most exquisite little fashion plate that could be seen; she also knew how to flirt with her fan or kerchief, and to roll her eyes very effectively; she could 'smile sideways and look down' when she received a compliment, and adulatory remarks were abundant. Miss Morrison spent all her time in amusing herself or doing something to accomplish herself; she spent all her money upon her own whims; she thought only of herself; she was the sun and the centre of her own activities.

"Aunt Nora declared that Miss Morrison's training was accomplishing its legitimate result, and making her a vain, frivolous, useless woman. The guardian angel wept, thinking how ill Miss Morrison was fitted to meet the dangers and trials of life; she had been left without moral principles or moral purpose; she had no knowledge of her Bible, no communion with God.

"Miss Morrison, however, had no idea that she lacked anything, and would have asked her mournful guardian angel what there was worth having that money could not buy.

"When Miss Morrison reached her seven-



teenth year her hair was done up on the top of her head, her skirt was decorated with a train, and she entered society as a young lady. She blushed and tears came into her eyes over her first party dress—there was so little of it in the waist and sleeve department; but she soon became accustomed to the full-dress, which is so largely undress, and also ceased to shiver inwardly when some almost unknown man, with wine on his breath, holding her closely clasped, whirled her off in a waltz. Of course, Miss Morrison was not so unfashionable as to object to wine. She took it herself and offered it to others.

“In the dizzy maze and splendor of her first season in society Miss Morrison sat up until the early hours of the morning; and what with these late hours of dissipation and continuous dancing, she would have died with fatigue if she had not slept each day until noon, and stayed in bed on Sabbath until it was time to rise and receive a train of young gentlemen callers.

“In the midst of her second season’s gayety two of her young friends died. These sudden deaths caused a lull in the winter’s dissipation. A revivalist was preaching in the city. Religious interest pervaded the churches. A large number of young persons, Miss Morrison among them, concluded that they had better

join the church. Nothing could be more kind and cordial than the pastor and session when they met these young people. They shook hands, bade them welcome into the church, and said it was just what they had looked for. Miss Morrison had supposed that they would lay down some rules about her conduct or duties, inquire into her experiences, give her warnings, demand some promises. She was rather in dread, for she found her mind a blank as to religious knowledge or holy purposes. 'You have been brought up in our church and Sunday-school; your parents were among our members before you were born. You have been well instructed of course by them. We are so glad to see you come forward.' They forgot or overlooked the fact that she had been very irregular at church and only occasionally at Sunday-school. They never dreamed how small an amount of religious instruction she had had."

"I should think," said Catharine, "that she might have heard sermons enough to have informed her of the whole plan of salvation."

"Sermon-hearing is an affair of habit. If parents do not teach their children to listen to the sermon, do not help them to listen, do not question them as to what they have heard in church, they get a habit of inattention and dream away the sermon-time. The mind of

Miss Morrison had always been preoccupied by her daily affairs and amusements, and she had not been taught how to divest herself of the ordinary routine and be free of the world in the house of God."

"But of course she had a Bible," said Miss Martin.

"True, but children need to be taught to read and love the Bible. When a child sees its parents loving and studying the Word of God, when the holy book is made the man of their counsel, when the child is told from its earliest years the beautiful Scripture stories and gospel truths, then a knowledge of the Bible becomes a matter of course. It was not a well-known book to Miss Morrison; its pages meant little or nothing to her."

"I'm afraid she did not prove a very useful church member," said Myrtle. "Tell us what she did after she united with the church."

"There was a little attempt at piety after that. Miss Morrison taught in Sunday-school for a whole month, and attended evening service with some regularity until warm weather set in. She was even seen four times at prayer-meeting. After that she went to Saratoga and to the White Mountains and to spend a year in Europe, and was gayer than ever. When had she remembered to read her Bible or say her pray-

ers? Sometimes the guardian angel whispered such questions in her ear as she lay wakeful at night."

"But what did she *do* with her life?" asked Catharine. "Was she content to drift, and did she enjoy that?"

"Of course she followed the way of her mother and became a fashionable society woman," said Myrtle.

"With such opportunities of wealth and leisure as she had, and foreign travel, why did she not study art?" asked Miss Martin. "I should think she would have set up a studio and have had the best teachers and have been a painter or a sculptor. I should have done something with my life!"

"So should I," said Catharine. "Think how she might have gone through college and have attended lectures in a foreign university and have read in great libraries! I would have tried to discover something or write something. I would have bought books and would have made my home a literary centre."

"It seems to me that I should have found out some way of life that had an object in it," said Myrtle. "I don't think I could have had such a passion for art or learning as Miss Martin and Catharine, but I should have tried to do something. I should have built up a home—a

real useful home-like home, where people would be better and happier when they came to it. What did Miss Morrison do? Did she marry?"

"People said that Miss Morrison was hard-hearted. She made several engagements of marriage, and broke them at her pleasure. There was no reason, she thought, why papa should not find her a high-born suitor, if she wanted one; he had money enough. Yet, now and then, when she heard minor music or saw a funeral, she wished she had been brought up to be different in some way; she would be glad if she were not so afraid to die, and if she knew a little more about God.

"Once an old pastor asked her about her future hope. She said she supposed, of course, she should get to heaven. 'Would you enjoy heaven if you reached there?' he asked. 'Might you not find yourself an alien in heaven? The only door of heaven is the crucified Christ; the language of heaven has for its keynote, "Not unto us, but to thy name be glory." God is our Father because of his Son, our Saviour; the garments of heaven are washed white in the blood of the Lamb, and there the happy dear-bought people follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.'

"When Miss Morrison heard all this, she looked into her heart, and found there nothing in harmony with such a heaven.

“Sadder and sadder grew the guardian angel, until Miss Morrison was making her preparations to marry an avowed infidel, a man of distinction, who openly mocked at the ‘Calvary myth.’ Then the guardian angel fled to heaven for comfort, and, entering the celestial gate, took courage, for there before the throne of the Prayer-Hearer lay the prayers for Miss Morrison offered by Grandmother Morrison, which prayers were yet unanswered. Filled with new hope, the guardian angel turned earthward again, and saw, through the glimmering haze of sun-smiten dust hovering over the city street, a wrecked carriage, and people lifting from under the horse’s feet a limp and lovely form.”

“Oh! what more!” cried the girls in a breath. “Did she die? What happened after that?”

“What did happen?” said Mrs. Nugent. “What do you think happened?”

“I think,” said Miss Martin, “that she was fatally hurt, but not dead. I think that they took her home, and that the doctors said she had but a few weeks to live. Then I think that the old minister came to see her, and that she turned her thoughts towards God. I think she was grieved that her life had been so idle and wasted, and that she was comforted and forgiven, and that for the few days that she had to live she grew in grace and in the knowledge of

Christ, and that she died a peaceful death, and so her guardian angel was satisfied, and the prayers of her grandmother were at last answered."

"I do not think it ended that way," said Myrtle. "I think that after a time she grew better, and finally she was well in her head and in general health, but crippled for life, so that she lay always on her couch in her room or was carried from room to room. I think that at first she mourned and lamented and rebelled and repined, but that after a time her afflictions worked out for her the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Then I think that she began to interest herself for others, in religion and philanthropy. I think she took all the papers and magazines that could tell her about Christian work: I think she was a great friend to Home and Foreign Missions, to child-rescue work, to the Bible Society and the Tract Society. I think she supported colporters and educated young girls and built parsonages for poor pastors, and established Sunday-schools and built churches in destitute places, and that she did much good in a long and happy life, and so her life was much happier at the end than at the beginning."

"I think the result was different from that," said Catharine. "I think that she was ill and suffering from her injuries for a long while, and

so learned sympathy with suffering through suffering. I think that her near brush with death made her realize the folly of her past life, and that she heartily repented of her wasted days and wasted opportunities. Then I think God gave her back health and strength and opportunity, and that she went about doing good. I think that she worked for working-girls and women, that she left the beaten ways of philanthropy and sought out new paths for her own feet to tread towards heaven, and that on her way she took many rescued lives and hearts with her."

"But what was the end, really, Mrs. Nugent!" cried all the girls.

"You have each ended it, as was best for yourselves. See, the porter has made up nearly all the berths."

"The other engine is right near," said young Martin, coming up; "now we shall get on again. How many more mishaps are we likely to have on this trip?"

"We are having a lovely time, mishaps or not," said his sister, as she bade the others good-night.



## CHAPTER XI.

“STILL more disasters!” cried Mr. Glass the next day about noon.

What were the disasters? A fierce sleet-storm was raging, and the train was likely to be ice-bound as it had been snow-bound; the track was so slippery that the train crept slowly along with frequent pauses, and no doubt would soon stop entirely. After dinner, in fact, having reached a dismal little station of a few houses, the train waited for better weather.

The gentlemen left the cars and betook themselves for variety to the little store and station of the young Western town. The ladies, storm-stayed in the Cadmus, asked Mrs. Nugent for a story. “Tell us something that you know to be true, one of your experiences or something that has happened under your observation,” said the soprano.

“Very well. And if I tell you a story, then you young ladies must sing us some ballads and Scotch songs.”

“We will.”

“And if we are still snow-bound, Myrtle must recite for us ‘Bairnies, cuddle doon,’

and Catharine must recite 'The Skeleton in Armor.' "

"We will," said Myrtle and Catharine.

"And Miss Martin must give us some Chinese life."

"I will," said Miss Martin.

"Now as there is a full programme prepared for an afternoon," said Miss Lossing, "I think, Mrs. Nugent, that you should begin your story without delay."

"It is an incident of my life in London," said Mrs. Nugent, "and I have called it

"EVEN THINE ALTARS, O LORD."

One of the newly built London churches boasts "all the modern conveniences." Among other luxuries it has, opening from the vestibule, a small but beautiful waiting-room, richly carpeted, where, during cold weather, a bright fire burns in the fireplace every Sabbath.

The congregation had gathered on a stormy February morning, when between the accents of the invocation the sexton thought that he heard a strange sound proceeding from this room. He stole there with noiseless steps, and as he stepped within the embroidered portière a curious sight met his eyes. A little girl, wearing a ragged woollen hood and the smallest and thinnest of shawls, was seated on a hassock close

to this delightful fire. Her bare feet showed through the rents in the sodden shoes as she strove to hold them near the fire-warmth. But her chief efforts were not for herself. On her lap lay a small, feeble, thin, ragged baby. The girl was holding the blue, wasted feet and knees of this infant to the fire, and meanwhile, caressing its head, crooned to it, "There, there, my baby. Did you ever have such a good fire before? There, my dear, get warm and you will not be sick, my poor little baby! There! there!" The little nurse's tones and motions were truly maternal. She smoothed and arranged the miserable clothing of her nursling, and then, taking from her bosom, where she had evidently tried to keep it warm with the meagre warmth of her chilly body, a common three-ounce bottle of very poor skimmed milk, she held it for a minute or two to the fire, and then, taking out the cork, tried to pour some of the milk into the baby's mouth. It was but a poor feeding-bottle, but the infant was accustomed to it, and took a few mouthfuls successfully. Then it refused the unpalatable food. The little girl sighed, and setting the bottle on the hearth, said. "I'll let it get warmer, and then you'll like it better, my dearie. Oh, my poor wee baby! Why can't I get you nice milk, with sugar in it? Why can't I get you a big warm shawl?"

The sexton saw that she was crying; she wiped her eyes on the baby's wretched little gown, and then, bending her face to the child's bald head, she shook with hard, dry sobs, more pitiful than tears. But these disturbed her nursing, and controlling herself, she began to croon softly, "By-lo, by-lo." The sexton was moved; but these vagrants were very ragged, dirty, and intrusive, and did not belong to his wealthy congregation. He was about to step forward and dismiss them summarily, when from the audience-room behind him the choir broke forth into his favorite music: "Yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God!" and as the voices lingered on, the tones of his memory supplied those other words, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

The words checked him in his intention; no doubt the Lord of all was welcoming these helpless little London sparrows to his own house! Still, he was impelled to do something, and happily spying the door of the infant-class room open, stepped, still silently, to shut it, when on the blackboard the lesson written for the day

met his eye: "Jesus said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Surely if he, the Lord of all, stood there, bodily present, he would not banish these suffering ones from the firelight to the stormy streets! The sexton looked towards them, and left still ajar the door through which he read the verse that pleaded in their behalf.

Again the soft mourning of the little girl's voice, "Go to sleep warm, my baby. Soon we must go out into the cold. Oh I'm afraid you'll die, my baby, and I'll be all alone! Oh I can't keep you warm when the wind is so cold and my shawl is so little! Oh, my baby, why does nobody care for we?"

Certainly a wiser heart than his must meet this pitiful case. Sexton Rogers stepped back into the audience-room. His eyes fell on a face at once strong, gracious, womanly, among the many turned intently towards the minister as he read the morning chapters. Sexton Rogers stole discreetly down the aisle and asked Mrs. Fortescue to come into the vestibule. Having told her what he had seen and heard, he gently admitted her to the parlor so oddly tenanted.

The little girl was again trying to feed the baby. "Wont you eat it, dear? You'll starve,

else ! Drink some, baby, it is so nice and warm ! We'll have to go pretty soon, baby ; take your milk, and let me get you so comfortable, my dear."

Mrs. Fortescue stepped forward. " Why are you here, my little girl ?"

The child turned white with terror, and clasping the infant closer, gasped, " We'll go ! We'll go ! Don't call the bobby ! I did n't mean no harm ! Oh we was so cold an' wet, me and baby ! I knowed there was a fire here, an' I thought we'd slip out before any one see us."

" Hush, hush," said Mrs. Fortescue gently. " I am glad you came in. Do not be afraid. Tell me who you are."

" I'm Annie Kent, and this is my baby. My mother is dead. She gave the baby to me."

" How old are you both ?"

" I'm ten, and my baby is five months. And she was only three weeks when mother died. I've took care of her since. We had no money for rent, and no food, and mother tried too soon to go out charring, an' she took sick and died. I'm so afraid my poor baby will die. We get so cold, and I can't get her only a drop of skim milk ; an' she has no flannels. Do you think I can't make her live till it is warm weather ? She do n't grow at all ! Oh I do n't want her to die ! She is all I've got in the world. So many

of them died—five or six—and mother gave her to me. Wont she get strong and grow?"

"How is it that you are out this cold day?"

"Father put us out. He was in liquor, ma'am; he most always is. And he said he would n't have baby whining round. And—and—I did n't mind going, ma'am. I'm so afraid he'll beat my poor baby, like he beats me! Only it is such a bad storm. An' as I came by here I thought of the fire, an' I could n't 'elp just to come in an' get my baby warm. Mother an' me, ma'am, once, as was about a year ago, come in 'ere an' got a warm, an' 'eard the music. We dare n't go into where the preachin' was, because we were so ragged. But mother told me this was God's own house, and he do n't begrudge us; and she said he would n't begrudge us of a place called 'eaven, where he lives most of the time; an' we would n't be kep' out of there along of no clothes, for he 'as a plenty, an' gives 'em to all as comes. I wisht me an' baby could find that place, so as we could go together. Mother said she was a-goin' when she died, but 'ow she could I do n't know; the men shut her up in a box, an' folks said she was dead. Only she told me she was goin' to 'eaven."

Tears were streaming over the beautiful face of Mrs. Fortescue and over the wrinkled cheeks of the gray-haired sexton.

"No doubt, my child," said Mrs. Fortescue, "your mother is in heaven, well and happy; but God has left it to some of us to take care of you here in this world." The lady and the sexton had at that moment their minds running in the same channel. She thought of what she had read that morning: "Whoso receiveth one such little child in My name, receiveth me." He thought how he had been reading of Christ, and had felt rising within him a strong desire to be like his Lord.

Was not the way now open for Christlike action? "There are in this world," said Mrs. Fortescue, "many childless homes and many homeless children." Then after a pause, "Rogers, your home is near, and you have the little room where your niece used to sleep. Cannot you take these little ones there and tell Sara for me not to be anxious? I will be at all charges for them."

Sara was Rogers' crippled wife. A niece had lived with them, but she had married and gone to Canada, and since then Rogers, neat-handed as any woman, had kept their little home in order. "But," added Mrs. Fortescue, "these children are so very ragged and dirty, Sara could not endure it even until I could get them clothes to-morrow."

"Mayhap, as Mrs. Grant has two of these



sizes, I can get suits from her," suggested Rogers.

"Buy them from her with this," said Mrs. Fortescue, holding out a pound note.

"O ma'am, half of it would buy nearly all the Grant children's clothes!"

"Pay the pound for the two suits, Rogers. It will be a good excuse for helping Mrs. Grant a bit." Then to the little girl, "Go, my dear, with this good man; he will take you where you will have fire and food and clothes until I come to see you to-morrow." Annie Kent comprehended that she was to be helped to save her baby.

Mrs. Fortescue took the baby and rolled it in a soft shawl that she had carried on her arm.

The sermon was half over when she returned to her pew, but the half that she heard sounded sweet as the bells of heaven, for the text was, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

\* \* \* \* \*

"You should have just seen Sara, ma'am," said Rogers afterwards to Mrs. Fortescue, "when I brought in them children. She threw up her hands, so surprised she was; and then she set to an' cried, so miserable they was to look at. She would n't let me come back to the church till I'd got on a big kettle of water to

'eat, and 'anded 'er a bowl and soap and towel to wash that baby after that I'd fetched the things from Mrs. Grant. Well, I did that much and back to the church. It was well on to an hour an a 'alf when I got 'ome again, for I stayed until after Sunday-school, and I had to lock the church. Well, Sara, she 'ad given that baby a good scrub, an' she told me it was the pitifullest anatomy ever she set eyes on. Sara washed and dressed that baby, and gave it a good feed of new milk, warm and sweet. I found it asleep, as cosey as could be, on a pillar in a chair near the fire, an' Annie, she was clean, and brushed an' dressed an' too 'appy for words. That baby was good as gold. It seemed so surprised-like to be kep' clean an' warm an' full, it jes' lay an' cooed all day long. That Annie could n't do enough to show how grateful she were. She was fair 'mazed not to be swore at or 'ave things thrown at 'er or be 'it clips on the 'ead. She minded all Sara said, an' took such pains scrubbin' an' cookin', rubbin' windows, black-leadin' the grate! Her mother must 'ave been a mighty good woman, Annie took so ready to nice ways. She could n't understand why I should carry the water up stairs for her, it bein' too hard work for a slim slip like 'er, but she was n't used to no kind of good treatment from a man."

"I wonder," said Mrs. Fortescue, "that the father did not make trouble for you, coming after them."

"At first Annie was that afraid she dare n't put 'er 'ead out o' doors. But I settled 'im; put on my worst clothes an' went a mile off to that slum where 'e lived. Says I, 'I've got no childer an' I want a couple; let me 'ave yours!' 'Yes,' he says, 'I will sell them for a pound.' I told 'im I did n't trade so 'igh; an' two or three times I made to go off, but 'e called me back, an' the folks in the 'ouse they set to an' says the baby was bound to die, and then 'e'd 'ave an inket on his 'ands; an' the childer were no good to 'e, 'e ought to be glad to be rid of 'em; so by-an'-by 'e comes down to five shillin' for Annie, an' the baby for a sixpence thrown in, an' I got 'em!"

"Bought them, Rogers!" cried the astonished lady. "The bargain was not legal; he would not keep to it."

"It's a common deal, ma'am. I could buy 'alf the childer in the slums at two an' six a head; but a baby for sixpence *was* cheap. They as sells 'em never goes back on it. They'd 'ave to return the money, which they has n't, an' they don't dare to come to court. It's all along of the liquor, ma'am; they say as 'ow it makes brutes of men, but it's worse nor any

brute ; they drinks till they 'as no feelin's left. An' so I says to Annie, 'Don't fear any longer. I've bought you both with some of the money Mrs. Fortescue gave me.' Well, that girl she downs on 'er knees an' makes a prayer : 'O God, how good you are to let daddy Rogers buy us ! I most think I 'm in 'eaven,' she says.

"Just tell her a thing is good for her baby, an' she learns it as quick as a wink. She learned to knit and to sew wonderful. Before two month she could cook our meals as tidy as the next one. She could n't go to school, but nights I taught her to read, write, and cipher, equal to a *board school*.

"Me an' Sara seemed to grow young over them childer. If the baby'd been ours, we could n't have 'ad more pleasure watchin' it learn to walk an' to talk. Sara says, 'It's real robbery to let Mrs. Fortescue pay twenty pound a year for their board an' clothes, when the children is such a comfort to we.' An' indeed, ma'am, we're layin' up money on it."

"I think God sent the children to us both, Rogers," said Mrs. Fortescue, "and my share is to give the money. I could not do less."

Over three years after, Mrs. Fortescue gave a May-day party to the Sunday-school children, and the pet of the party was a plump, rosy, curly-haired child, who, like a little queen, was surrounded and petted by the rest.

"Who is that fine child?" we asked.

"She belongs partly to me, partly to Rogers, our sexton, and most of all to that bright, healthy, motherly girl, her sister, who keeps near her," said Mrs. Fortescue; and then she told me the story of this little pair of London sparrows.

## CHAPTER XII.

EARLY on Sunday morning the long-delayed train, the fortunes of whose passengers we have been narrating, ran into the Omaha station. It reached that much-desired refuge in the very teeth of a terrible storm which broke down the telegraph lines, blockaded the trains, and not a car moved out of the station that day.

By this time the Transformation Man had concluded to cast in his fortunes with Mr. Brandt. Mr. Brandt gave letters for the chief clerk of the steamship line to the three Italians, gave the Transformation Man also a letter which would secure him a position, and put the Italians and little Nora under his care, to start for New York early on Monday morning. The man was to see the Italians safely to their boarding-house in New York, to await the next steamer for Leghorn. Little Nora he was to take to her friends. These plans being made, Mr. Brandt promised to meet Mrs. Nugent and her party at the hotel, and meantime took the Italians, Nora, and the Transformation Man to a little boarding-house near the station and paid for their accommodation until the next day.

The party on the Cadmus were now separating: Mr. Glass, the musical young ladies, Mr. Marshall, and the Martins, who travelled in his care, bade the other travellers good-by and went to a hotel where Mr. Marshall was accustomed to stay when in Omaha.

"I shall see you again," said Mrs. Nugent to the Martins. "You will be in New York, and so shall I; I will find you out."

As she kissed the blonde soprano good-by she whispered, "You will surely keep your promise!"

"Indeed I will," the girl replied earnestly.

Miss Lossing with her orphans, and Miss Matlack, all of whom now seemed parts of her family, went to the same hotel where Mrs. Nugent took Catharine and Myrtle. The day was too inclement for any of them to venture out to church; they gladly betook themselves to their own rooms for rest and renovation.

As dinner-time drew near Mr. Brandt sent up a note to Mrs. Nugent, proposing that all their company should go to dinner together, having a table to themselves, and adding that he had secured a private parlor where they might all pass the afternoon in comfort and quiet.

After dinner therefore these friends of a week, who had been drawn so closely together, went to the private parlor. Miss Matlack sat by

a window with the younger of the orphans on her lap, watching the few passers-by in the stormy street. Catharine and the ladies read, and Myrtle told the elder orphan the story of Joseph. She told the story well, and Mr. Brandt, listening to it, took it home.

"It is nearly Christmas-time," said Miss Losing at last, "and this is probably the last afternoon when we shall all be together. I have taken from my trunk a magazine containing a story which I like well.

"I wish, Mrs. Nugent, that you would read it. The story is a true one, written by the same friend who sent me the story of her haunted home. It is an incident that occurred in her early life, when she was spending a winter in the North."

Mrs. Nugent took the magazine. The child in Mary Matlack's lap had fallen asleep, the other child sat by Myrtle and rested against her arm. "The story," said Mrs. Nugent, "is called

#### "MAYOR CHRISTMAS."

"Can you see the mayor? No, you can't. He's at his dinner."

"I can wait," said the gaunt petitioner, securing her shawl, which the wind, like a tricky schoolboy, had nearly carried away.



"Wait! Oh yes, that's the way with all of them; they wait and waylay him and talk at him, the minute he's done eating, till I'll be bound he dies of dyspepsia!"

The woman at the mayor's door had been humble and low-voiced at first; now her face grew defiant, and she would have replied to the servant wrathfully, but a piping, cracked voice quavered out of the distant dining-room, "Maria! Maria! how often have I told you never to send the poor away when they come to see me!"

"There! that's it!" said Maria ungraciously; "come in and wait. Land knows, I try to save him trouble."

Mrs. Bundy slipped into the shelter of the wide hall. A great stove of Russia iron, with a royal wood fire in it, was pouring forth welcome heat in the midst. The stove was decorated with black cherubs blowing horns and scattering inky flowers, and with blind goddesses emptying cornucopias. Mrs. Bundy could not appreciate these objects of art, but she sat down near the fire and the bits of muddy ice that were fringing her dress melted, running into puddles all about her on the floor.

For a few moments the cracked voice that had secured her admission was heard expostulating with Maria, and then the mayor came into

the hall. A short, wrinkled, bald-headed old man, wearing a swallow-tailed coat, a standing collar with high points that maliciously threatened his eyes ; his slippers were too large, and as he walked the heels flapped up and down against the hall oil-cloth ; he was wiping his mouth on a red silk handkerchief, and warbled out in tones like a hoarse robin, " Now, my good woman."

" Sir, I 've come to ask a favor."

" Very good," said the mayor cordially.

" It is, sir, that my nephew, a likely boy, too, will be brought before you to-morrow morning for a breach of the peace, and there 's them that will try to lay all the blame on him, sir, as he 's young, but he 's not in fault."

We will admit that his honor looked incredulous ; but it had seemed to him, in reading his Bible, that God especially guarded the civil rights of the poor. " The righteous considereth the cause of the poor," saith Scripture ; and the mayor kept the word in heart and life, listening to all the poor had to say with an " eternal patience " that might be named a genius for doing good.

" Explain the matter to me," said the old gentleman, gathering his coat-tails under his arms and turning his back to the stove. " First, where do you live?"

"In Pea Soup Flats, sir—moved there from the Welling Block."

"Ah! a very bad neighborhood," said the mayor innocently. "I cannot see why so many flock to those localities."

"Sir," said Mrs. Bundy, with an earnestness that was dignity, "do you suppose we go there from *choice*? Do we like to live where roofs leak, where windows are broken, and heads too, where the streets run slime, and our children are always falling on broken pavements; where every other house is a groggery, and the air is never still from the noise of quarrelling and oaths, sir? Why do we go where there's dirt and smells and disease and a burial by the poor-master every day? Why, we go because we cannot raise the rent they asks us in decenter places; and God knows we are hard put to it to make it where we are."

"Pity! pity! pity!" sighed the mayor.

"There are things you can do, sir, to better it, I'd think. Is it in the power of the law to clean out them doggeries, where they fight and gamble and drink night and day? It was along of that my nephew fell in trouble. He's a lively lad, and works at unloadin' canal boats and the like. Well, sir, you could hardly expect him to stay of nights in my bit of a room, or in the closet he sleeps in off of it. So, sir, one Phil

Ryan beguiled him into his groggery, to make jokes and fun for 'em; and while he was there they gets into a fight; but my nephew, Ned, had nothing to do with the fight, nor was he drunk. He tried to peaceify the men, when some one gives notice of the police comin', and away they all runs; but my Ned, not having done ill, did n't stir, and *him* the p'lice nabbed, sir, and will have him up before your honor to-morrow. There's Ryan will make out as Ned made the trouble, because if some one must be punished he'd far rather it was my lad, as he's not a paying customer, than those roughs who spend their money with him, and had as lief burn his shanty down, if they got mad at him. Now, your honor, don't be hard on my Ned, for if you fines him, we can't pay; and if to prison he goes, sir, we'll starve without his help this bitter weather."

"You may rely on it that I will examine the affair thoroughly, and be as lenient as I can with Ned. What family have you, good woman?" asked the mayor.

"Sure, sir, my husband has been bad a year with a crushed arm. He's a sailor, sir, a common hand, and he shipped as soon as he got well, which is two months since, on the brig 'Betsy' out of this port. If ever he gets home alive, I hope we'll move out of these Pea Soup Flats

and see better days ; but you know, sir, the season is late, and the weather bad, and the brig 'Betsy' is overdue."

"I know all that, but she'll be in safe, never fear. She's sound and well manned. I own the 'Betsy,'" said the mayor cheerily.

"The Lord send her safe!" sighed Mrs. Bundy. "As to the family, sir, we've my father, and he's past eighty. Then there's my girl Nell, she's crippled ; and I've two slips of boys that have had to turn their hands to what they could since my man's hand was hurt. They're biddable boys, and pick up fuel at the ship-yards ; and they gather up swill night and morning, and sell it to our Flat folk at a half a cent a bucket. Then there's two bits of young ones---dear knows when they'll do a hand's turn. My Nell was sore set on helping, and I managed at last to get her skein-silk to straighten and buttons to sew on their cards ; but 't was hard work doing it, sir, for folks seem to think we as is poor enough to live on the Flats must be thieves. Not to trouble you more, you'll bear Ned Bundy in your mind, sir?"

"Yes, yes," said the mayor kindly ; "it is Christmas-time now, and one must be lenient---Christmas-time, my woman, the time of goodwill for the Lord's sake."

"Belike it *is* Christmas-time, but I'd most

forgotten. Once my poor babes used to break my heart crying for me to get 'em presents, but they've ceased crying for what never comes. There may be Christmas for you, but there is no Christmas for the poor, sir—none, though there is one Lord over all."

No Christmas for the poor! The mayor repeated the words to himself. The woman rose to go, and he led her out through the warm, pleasant dining-room, where Maria had just finished her dinner and was putting away the silver. The woman did not look at the table, but perhaps there was a gleam of hunger in her eyes which the mayor caught, for just as she reached the door he plucked at her dingy shawl and pulled her back.

"Bless me! sit down and have your dinner. Why pass a table with plenty on it? Sit down! sit down!"

He pushed her into a chair and looked about. An empty bread-plate was near him, so he set that before her and began to fill it up.

"Beef, butter—have some chicken? Turnips, potatoes—take 'em all."

He piled her plate with all eatables within reach, while Maria looked on aghast. What crowning vagary of her eccentric master was this? Broken, moist shoes resting on the roses of the new Brussels carpet, the battered bonnet

and faded shawl hanging over the walnut chair, patched calico sleeves dropping against the damask cloth—the soul of Maria could hardly endure this Vandal raid.

The woman ate like one that was hungry; but as she ate she thought of lame Nell, the old father, the scrawny babies that had never seen luxuries or such abundance.

Perhaps the mind of his honor was *en rapport* with this forlorn mother's; for even as he had divined her hunger, he *felt* the thought of her children.

“See here! see here! we must have something sent to the little ones.” He looked about, seized a roast chicken by one leg with his right hand, and caught the morning's paper from the seat of an easy-chair, placed the chicken on the paper, and then peered anxiously into the recesses of the carcase. It held less than the Trojan horse—indeed, was empty. “The stuffing is gone,” said the little gentleman, “but perhaps mashed potatoes will fill it as well.” In went the potatoes, then some biscuit were piled about the fowl, and being still like his grandmother Eve, “on hospitable thoughts intent,” he began to fashion an edible pyramid, using sweet potatoes; not being dexterous, the potatoes fell down, slipped from his fingers, rushed into the gravy-boat, and one tumbled upon the floor,

whence Mrs. Bundy rescued it, and after a few moments ate it up.

Maria, who had looked on wrathful and perplexed, now came to her master's rescue and tied up the parcel.

"May you never know want!" said Mrs. Bundy; "you're good to the miserable."

"There are compensations for us all, ma'am," said the little mayor. "I have this home, and such and such of the good things of this life—that we will not mention; but I am alone, without child or household. *You* have those that love you, even in your poverty. Children—yes, I often think how much pleasanter my house would be if there were a voice in it beside my own, *and* Maria's and the cook's."

"As for children," said Mrs. Bundy, "there's plenty of 'em you could get for the askin'—nice little critters, left lone and homeless. Ah, I know about it!"

The mayor shook his head. "Would you part with one of your own, for instance?"

"Mine! well—no. Please God, we'll hold together."

So Mrs. Bundy went away, and the mayor sat down to read his magazine, wherein were stories and songs and pictures suited to jolly Christmas. But over all the pages were broadly written the words, "No Christmas for the poor."



And what Christmas would there be for him? Once, with madcap brothers and sisters, he had hailed the merry mornings with delight. Now these snowflakes that scurried past, forerunners of the storm, fell whitely on all their graves. Those old times! Early in the morning his mother sent him forth to bear her bounty to the poor. To no servant was committed the sacred errand from door to door; coming and going, he ran from breakfast until nearly dinner-time, carrying good wishes and good cheer. What a glorious appetite he had earned as he fed others! And that mother!—never was she more present to his mind than at Christmas-tide. Ah! there had been Christmas for *her* poor; and though she sat at the head of her board like a queen in her satin and point lace, she was never so noble and gracious as when her hands dispensed glad Christmas to the poor.

The room grew dim and whirled about a little; this wrinkled, bald-headed mayor did not know but he was crying.

Maria was brushing up the crumbs and narrowly searching to detect marks of Mrs. Bundy's feet on the carpet.

"Maria, are we not very lonesome?" asked the mayor. "Would we be happier if I brought some children here to make a home for them?"

"Ah, sir, sir—we had enough of that; did we

not break all our hearts over doing it, and losing?—and—”

Maria broke into husky sobs, flung her apron over her head, and rushed down into the cellar-kitchen.

More memories! The mayor's youngest sister's legacy had been her orphan son. He came to the old man's house a beautiful, winning, spoiled boy, to be doted on and indulged, to grow wild and run away. Ah! what bootless searching! Ah! what bitter loneliness and waiting! What agony of prayers sent after that prodigal! Still ten years, and you are lonely yet, Mr. Mayor; and that recreant nephew may be criminal or beggared or hungry—one of those poor who have no Christmas! The old man's heart was full. When he was unhappy, his best resource was to do something for somebody. He went to the head of the basement stairs and quavered out, “Maria! Maria!”

Maria appeared at the lower landing. She had put her cap high on her head, pinned up her frock sleeves and skirt. *Her* refuge was in work. She set her arms akimbo and had between her teeth half a yard of celery stalk, with the top leaves on, and as she chewed the end in her mouth the leaves waved defiance about her face; she was defiant of her sorrow, and would not again be betrayed into its expression.

"Maria! the woman that was here mentioned to me that the poor had no Christmas."

"None of my fault," said Maria.

"We ought to try and help them to happiness."

"No end to your helping," growled the old servant.

"But, Maria, the Lord has said, 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.'"

"Mebbe you consider 'em too much," said Maria, and walked off. She did not intend to be made a party to her master's lavishing time or money on strangers.

The old gentleman was thrown back on himself and sat down to consider.

He had been elected mayor of his small but growing city by a majority so overwhelming that the vote of the townsmen might almost be called unanimous. This expression of the confidence of his compatriots demanded some especial return. The rich did not need anything at his hands, but to the poor he might requite it. The salary was but four hundred dollars; but last year he had lived in plenty, and had surplus of income accumulating in the bank, without this four hundred. Did he want it? No. He would bestow it on the city poor; but how? That was the question over which the mayor wrinkled

his forehead and unconsciously scorched his big slippers, and sat until tea-time to determine. No doubt angels stood with gentle promptings on either side of this little man in spectacles and swallow-tailed coat.

Now as this man mused, light dawned on his countenance; he tasted already the blessedness of the coming good. A vision passed before him—a vision of sunshine penetrating dark corners, of glad faces lifted up as the music of Christ's birthday bells came to them with a meaning; good-will, good-will in action, bounty and blessing exchanged between rich and poor.

The next three days were busy ones for the mayor. He was not too busy to remember the case of Ned Bundy—which having sifted, he sent the lad home rejoicing, with an admonition to keep out of grogshops for ever after. Over the light of Phil Ryan's *saloon* the police settled like an extinguisher; when Phil was fairly put out, a little cobbler came into his place, for Pea Soup Flats swarmed with inhabitants, and its tenements were never vacant for a day.

On "the night before Christmas," that halcyon night when friends feasted each other, when children danced about lighted and laden trees, then were those "two slips of boys" belonging to Mrs. Bundy sent abroad through the many-roomed Welling Block and the ill-famed

Flats as *avant couriers* of the coming benison. These lads went prancing through the biting cold, joyous in new red comforters and stout new shoes, presented by Mr. Mayor, and were thus earnest of the good about to be.

It was Christmas eve, and cold. "A green Christmas makes a full graveyard," is the proverb of our northern land; but the cold of this Christmas week had filled the river with floating blocks of ice, had piled the ice along the lake shore, and would make fearful work for sailors in their ships—for the man at the wheel, for those who handled sleet-mailed shroud, climbed the mast, or held watch on the slippery deck; and still the brig "Betsy" had not made her port, and his honor, the mayor, in his comfort-full house, again sympathized with the soul of Mrs. Bundy, who did slop-sewing in her twelve-by-fourteen room.

His honor was not an extravagant man, but on the day before Christmas he spent the four hundred dollars of salary received from an office which boasted rather of dignity than of emolument.

On Christmas morning our good man was busy with the earliest light, reviewing a small procession. Here were the baker's carts, his largest full of noble loaves of bread and fragrant sheets of ginger cakes. To the baker Mr.

Mayor had paid one hundred dollars. The smiling baker held the reins of the first cart, and two young men, well known for honesty and kindly humor, drove after him. The mayor could trust their judgment; they were too quick-witted, and understood the Flats too well, to be overreached; and they would give to every family according to their poverty and number.

Let the bread-wagons move on—here is the butcher. The butcher has a hundred and fifty dollars' worth of beef and pork. He has entered into the spirit of the occasion, and has harnessed to his huge wagon four horses, with hemlock branches ornamenting their heads. The butcher, like the baker, has two *aids-de-camp*, who understand the merits of the present case, love the mayor, and will deal out his benefits justly.

Here comes the last wagon. Another hundred and fifty dollars' worth in this. Coarse, warm shawls, stout shoes, woollen jackets, brilliant red and green scarfs, and piles of woollen stockings, even a few thick blankets.

"Remember," says the mayor to the three in charge of this cart, "these things are for the sick, the aged, and the little ones. You will not give clothing to idle men or drunken women. There are enough of the really needy to take it all."

The carts move on. As they start, the nine

men in charge set up a shout—"Three cheers for the Christmas Mayor!" And the three cheers last until the wagons leave that street and turn to Pea Soup Flats and its adjacent Welling Block, and the little mayor is left standing too happy to notice the wind that whistles about his bald head and flutters the narrow tails of his coat. He is not a Stoic, and he wipes his eyes on his red silk handkerchief.

The wagons near the places of evil note—the Welling Block, named from its owner, and close against its rear, Pea Soup Flats, lying along the river, its popular designation being unknown to the nomenclature of the city maps, but given from the chief article of diet of a mongrel race of French Canadians who formed more than half the population. It was a dismal hollow, where the slime and ooze, the reprobates and small groggeries of the city, had settled and stagnated. Here was a fine place to find Sabbath-school pupils—children who, taken to school one Sabbath, fell hopelessly away into gutter sports the next, and were rescued by the first stray philanthropist who drifted into their resorts. Here were stout women too delicate to work, and babes with such evident heritage of vice and disease that one shuddered even at the very small chance of their reaching maturity. Here were ragged men chronically out of employ-

ment, dreary hags, neglected and despairing, dropping into pauper-graves, and a race of bold-eyed wenches, whom may the dear Lord help in his pity! But there were also the decent, toiling, honest, discouraged poor, whom a trifle may destroy, and, thank God! whom a trifle may save.

The men in the wagons well understood all these phases of character. They entered on their rounds with a merry ringing of bells and a cry of "Come, help yourselves." The mayor had told them if the supply fell short of the legitimate demand, to look to him for more; but baker, butcher, and merchant had resolved to have a hand in the good work before they fell back on the mayor.

How the people came running! They had heard the good news, hardly believing—now they saw it. Out of the damp basements, down the broken stairs, from rooms big and little, dirty and clean, they came, the mothers with children hanging to their pitiful garments, sometimes a man, half pleased, half shame-faced, whose wife might be ill in her bed, or perhaps was gone to her grave. What laughing and smiling! The mother carrying the precious meat which she had chosen, the children bearing off the bread, the cake, or perhaps the woollen clothes dealt out to them.



Some were modest. "You are giving me too much—mebbe I'm getting more than my share. My man's in work and brought home flour; you may give me only beef."

So said some. Others were truthful about their family, giving the statistics of the household fairly; but others again deceived if they could. However, they were dealing with wary men. "Careful there, Betty," cries the butcher; "do not plead three children; you've not a chick or child in the world."

"A shawl for your grandmother, Mag Phail? The old woman was buried last September!"

"Away there, you in the red hood! I served you with bread three doors back."

"Do n't be greedy after blankets, Mrs. Kitchen. Your man earns good wages and do n't drink."

Some were willing to wait their turn, would be pleased easily and go off with a "Thank you;" others haggled over the meat as if they were buying it, and made invidious remarks about the size of other people's loaves.

On the whole, every one did pretty well. There was gratitude, cheerfulness, and self-sacrifice in plenty. The wagons made their rounds to general satisfaction; their progress was a benediction, and the men in charge went home twice blessed. Not only that, but from their

homes they sent out help for special cases. Did not the baker's wife run down to the Welling Block with clothes for the baby born that Christmas morning? Who but the butcher's daughter carried jelly and sago to the old woman with the broken leg? while the draper's boy fairly staggered under the bundle of jackets and wraps he was commissioned to carry to certain fatherless youngsters.

With the smoke of all these unusual dinners cooking in impoverished homes, with every glad child-laugh and deep breath of satisfaction, went up a prayer for favor and mercy upon him who "had mercy on the poor."

But this was not all. As the mayor ate his breakfast his heart glowed within. This was the best, the crowning Christmas since those child-days when all is glad. His charities increased with their exercise.

After the morning meal the little old gentleman put on his favorite great-coat, a coat with wide skirts and pockets innumerable. Fashionable people were wont to smile at the antiquated garment, but the angels regarded it as a beautiful covering that day.

The mayor chuckled to himself all along the street like a happy boy; then, boy-like, he stopped at the toy-shops; there he bought toys, common and small toys, but oh so many!—

dancing Jacks and Jacks in boxes ; little staring wooden dolls in pink frocks ; red tin cups with gilt lettering ; tin trumpets and wonderful hopping toads ; red and yellow books, that told of Dame Crumb and Cinderella and Puss in Boots ; red savings-banks and wee transparent slates ; tin horses, and numbers of squeaking dogs, ducks, and cats, with voices all pitched on the same key, and all partaking of the tone of Mr. Mayor.

The old man's pockets bulged out like those of Santa Claus ; he had no pack on his back, but he tied up in his beloved red kerchief all that it would hold. " It will make some of them laugh," he said ; so he too went towards the Welling Block and Pea Soup Flats, where his loaded wagons had gone before him.

Wonderful how the news of his coming and of his loading spread ! The scare-crow children who never had a toy flocked like little birds to a wheat-field. Hands held out, shrieks of joy and piping thanks, there were, and these little ones did not try to cheat like some of their elders, but rejoiced in their own and their neighbors' good. The kerchief and the pockets were emptied fast ; and now up to the frosty sky and over the sound of bubbling and frying and dinner-getting rose a cheer, and the new name that should follow the old man to his grave and was

good enough to be his epitaph: "Hurrah for Mayor Christmas! Three cheers and a tiger for Mayor Christmas!" And that tiger, leaping from a hundred little throats, was more royal and rousing than any that lorded it over Bengal jungles.

But another noise follows the footsteps of Mayor Christmas. These his deeds were not such as could be done in a corner. Already for a day the town had buzzed with the news, and who so emulous of good acts as children? A dozen jolly boys had borrowed a handcart, and had collected playthings through rows of wealthy homes. These youngsters were decorated with merry bells, and some were harnessed to the cart and some were running alongside; and how they dealt out toys and cakes, apples, popcorn, and candy! They were wary too and were not beguiled into giving twice to the same individual. Thus Mayor Christmas was followed by the effects of his good deeds as by a train of light; and perhaps among some of the bright-eyed boys who ran on in his steps was growing up another Mayor Christmas for the years to come.

Thus in Pea Soup Flats and the Welling Block all were glad; and there was scarcely a case of drunkenness or fighting in those places usually so prolific of them, when *real* Christmas

could not come. Now, the cart and the pockets being empty, all went to dinner.

At the home of Mayor Christmas, Maria was rejoicing in a new cloak and bonnet, and the black cook was radiant over a gown and turban. As for Mayor Christmas, he did not stop to ask whether any one had made him presents. God had sent him that day a happy heart and an appetite like a resurrection of his boyhood. When dinner was over he sat down in his big chair, laid his feet on the fender, spread his red handkerchief over his bald head, and got ready to drop asleep musing of the Mother and the Babe who made the first Christmas, so many centuries ago.

But the chair was near the window, and the window looked upon the street. A loud-voiced man went hurrying by. "A ship in distress! She's lost! She'll never make her port!"

Then came another hallooing "A tug! Has a tug gone out?"

And another: "The people are crowding to the piers and cliffs!"

Then Mayor Christmas felt in his soul that it was the brig "Betsy" that was driving on to ruin; and he knew already that Mrs. Bundy and Ned and the "slips of boys" were gone out in the cold to watch the headlong careering of the vessel that carried the sailor Bundy. Ah here

was the "Betsy" coming in behind her time, to be wrecked on Christmas day!

"Bring me my telescope, Maria; the 'Betsy' is running to ruin in the icy waves."

Maria brought the telescope. She got the fur cap, collar, and gloves, the favorite great-coat, and the fur-lined moccasins, and wept as the good man put them on and went out with a heavy heart. The wind had all day been cold and high; in the two hours since noon it had risen to a gale, and was now far out on that inland sea a tempest, lashing into fury the mighty waves. All who know the great lakes know their terrors in a storm. Each autumn ships are wrecked and sailors drowned, and the dangers are greater as the season grows late; and latest of all vessels was the "Betsy" coming in on Christmas day.

There was no doubting what craft it was that away out on the lake lifted its spars against a dull gray sky, as it toiled up on some mountain waves, and now plunged down as if to destruction in a trough of the sea, and shuddered into sight again, reeling and trembling like a gladiator almost worsted in the strife.

The lower part of the pier, the low cliffs upon which part of the city was built, the low shore to which the ice was clinging, grew dark with throngs of townspeople, all in an agony of

fear and horror for the incoming brig. Among the crowd stood "Mayor Christmas" and the Bundy family, and nothing would suit the old man but to have Ned tie the famous red kerchief about his chill bare throat, and then the Mayor made Mrs. Bundy wear the cape of his great-coat, which he said he could spare as well as not. There was praying and weeping and shrieking among the crowd; and still the brig drove on in unparalleled danger, being now lost to sight, and then looming up again just as all had despaired.

There are stout hearts in seaport towns; and amid all the perils of ice and storm, steam was got up on the best tug in port; and, well manned, it set its head valorously towards the harbor's mouth.

It was high time to send out aid, for the "Betsy" was tossing and pitching so wildly that it was evident her rudder was unshipped; the wind drove her directly towards the harbor, but that was narrow, and not to be entered by the disabled vessel unless help was afforded. The tug, unable to live in the heavy sea, went as far out as possible, and still the "Betsy" plunged on, the sport of wind and waves.

The mayor was groaning and wringing his hands.

"Was your ship insured, Mr. Mayor?"

"Insured, yes; but I could afford to lose her in any case. But the men, the husbands and sons who are in the brig—ah! neighbors—there's the trouble."

Like Winstanley, he cried out in his heart:

"O thou brave skipper blithe and kind!  
O mariners bold and true,  
Sorry at heart, right sorry am I,  
A-thinking of yours and you."

The interest grew intense; the storm increased. The lighthouse keeper made haste to light his lamps while yet it was possible to get to the tower along the pier. The waves drove higher and higher, and now their great crests dashed up ninety-feet to the top of the lighthouse, and curled and fell over it, the beacon glimmering dimly through the swirling foam. All the ice along shore was broken up, and the blocks crashed and ground against the pier and the shipping that lay safe moored in the harbor. Dashing on like a race-horse, the "Betsy" neared the coast; the helping boat darted and turned as if coquetting with the distressed brig; then a shout uprose from the lookers-on, for a great cable was got ready to make fast and the tug in a few moments would have the "Betsy" in tow.

Hope now—trembling, painful, but better than the late despair—and the excitement grew wilder as ship and tug came nearer, and now



each lay, as if taking breath, just at the harbor's mouth; but here the pass was narrow, and waves were pounding and flinging themselves a hundred feet into the air, and an island, on which many a stout vessel had made shipwreck, lay on the opposite side of the channel, rendering it narrow and unsafe.

"She will win in!" cried some. Hardly were the words gone forth when an enormous wave tossed brig and tug like cockle-shells. There was no chance of helping, and the smaller craft, with a few tremendous efforts, ran into smoother waters and was safe, while the "Betsy" lay quivering in the grasp of the storm. Only an instant for suspense was left. The brig was tossed up high on a wave, hung for one brief second trembling, and came down with a prodigious crash across the unflinching granite of the pier, lying rent and broken, the shattered stern upon the stones, the prow thrust down into the seething low water inside the harbor.

A great cry rose up, not from the seamen in peril, but from those who watched their fate. The tug put about and made towards them, and strong men rushed with ropes and helping hands along the wet ice-mailed pier. The men in the "Betsy," meanwhile, were climbing the sloping sides of their doomed vessel, and striving to make their way from her to their friends.

Nearly all were safe, when one person was seen to falter, slip, let go his hold, and drop down into the waves. Without a second of hesitation the man just behind plunged in after him, and the spectators cheered the valiant deed. The next thing that could be seen from shore was the rescue of these men, who, rising and struggling among the waters, seized the ropes cast to them and were drawn up alive, then passed along by the crowd, and, dripping and almost senseless, were taken into a small house upon the wharf. To this house pressed the Christmas Mayor, and near him followed Mrs. Bundy. Murmurs ran along the throng that all lives were saved, and already the heart of the mayor sang for joy. Every one gave way before the little old gentleman as he bobbed in to see the rescued men, and Mrs. Bundy, taking advantage of the opening, got in also. Without doubt the rough tar who had so bravely cast himself into the jaws of destruction to save a fellow-man in the very moment of his own escape was the husband of Mistress Bundy. But the saved man, who was he? Courage now, Christmas Mayor, your vessel never brought freight so rich before; here is your prodigal returned, a nephew in whom your soul may indeed be glad.

Bundy went to his lodgings in Pea Soup

Flats a popular man that night, and felt almost overwhelmed at the good fortune that lay before himself and his family; while all the little boys, and big men too, loudly cheered the carriage that took home "Christmas Mayor" and his nephew. Maria, softened and benevolent to a wonderful degree, spread again the festal board; nothing was too nice or fine to grace the joyous hour of this return.

"See, Maria," said the mayor, "the Scripture has again come true: 'He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.'"

Holidays have come and gone time and again to the "Christmas Mayor," but his house has never been lonely since the wreck of the "Betsy." The once prodigal nephew is the dutiful son of the good man's age, and little children hang their stockings in chimney-corners and dance about Christmas-trees and hear rare tales; and one can see that they have conquered even the grim Maria in the happy home of the "Christmas Mayor."

## CHAPTER XIII.

AT tea-time the story of the Christmas Mayor was mentioned, and two or three persons who shared the table with Mr. Brandt and his friends seemed to be much interested. There is a subtle sympathy between the people of God which draws them together. A lady said, "What a pleasant way you had of passing this stormy Sunday afternoon! I wish we could spend the evening so pleasantly."

"The Sunday afternoon," said Catharine, "was the successor of good afternoons which we have spent this last week while lost in the snow-drifts and suffering many disasters."

The two girls then began to talk of the stories which they had heard, and their various results.

"Your two Italian stories," said the lady, "remind me of a very touching incident known to a friend of mine. She wrote it out for me as my Christmas present, for it is a Christmas story."

Myrtle looked eager.

"May I invite you and your story to our parlor this evening?" suggested Mr. Brandt.

"I accept in behalf of myself and story."

"And you will also come?" said Mr. Brandt, glancing to two gentlemen and another lady at the table, storm-stayed members of a Temperance Convention, who should have reached their home on Saturday. They gladly accepted, and when all were in the parlor the lady read the simple little story of

#### THE GESU BAMBINO.

It was Christmas eve. The Italian cathedral was very gorgeous with lights and flowers. Every effort had been made to reproduce the scene in the churches in the dear home-land, so that the congregation of exiles stealing in from the New York streets might fancy themselves again in Florence or Leghorn or Pisa or Rome. In a gilded manger lay a Gesù Bambino, or infant Jesus, splendid in lace and muslin, watched over by a very beautiful image of a Madonna in a velvet robe and wearing a golden crown. Incense, music, altar-boys, choir-boys—and from nightfall a crowd coming and going, a crowd of dark, wistful, foreign faces.

Anita went there also, her basket of small wares on one arm, the swaddled two months' old baby on the other. Anita's heart was very heavy, and in her lovely dark eyes were tears that now and then welled over and rolled down her smooth brown cheeks.

Old Carola, the dame with whom the young Italian girls who had no parents in this noisy, rich western world had their home, had been very loud and angry, and had told Anita that the baby, the blessed little Teodoro Sandro, should not be kept by Anita at her house one day longer! She, Carola, had no time to look after crying babies, and Anita knew very well that if this bambino were carried about the streets in all weathers it would fall ill in this cruel climate, where children were as delicate as monkeys, and then Anita must stay at home to nurse a case of lungs! And surely Anita was aware that with a child on her arm she could not go so fast nor so far, nor sell so much in a day, as when she had no incumbrance but a basket.

“The long and short of it is,” old Carola said, “that Anita must get rid of the baby. Let her take it to the Foundling Asylum.”

At that the gentle Anita had flamed a little. “The foundling! A pretty place for the blessed little bambino, whose parents were both surely glorified saints in heaven! Did Carola suppose that for instance the Lord was deaf, and did not hear the prayers of a dying mother commending her wee baby to Him? Was it likely that the Good One, who somewhere or other had said that his name was Truth, would be

pleased if Anita broke her promise to care for Teodoro-Sandro? Surely if the holy Madonna was as kind as people said she was, she would have feeling about little Teodoro Sandro, and want him well dealt by, even if some folks did say that his father Jose had been a heretic, and led off by the Salvation Army, and that Maria, his mother, had read much more of the New Testament than was good for an ignorant girl. Had not Jose been Anita's first cousin? Had not Maria been her dearest friend? And when Jose had died, struck by a knife in the hand of a drunken man, who had been more patient and good than Maria, who had just sat praying and reading that queer little black Testament until the bambino came, and then had put it in Anita's arms with a prayer, and had closed her dark eyes and slipped away into glory! Put Maria's child in the foundling! Ah-h!"

"Well, then, foolish girl," said Carola, "put it in an asylum of some other kind, or carry it to the Sisters of St. Somebody, or let *i signori* the policemen, who do nothing but walk about with sticks, and find fault when warm-blooded gentlemen quarrel a little with knives, let them take the bambino somewhere; what are they good for, pray tell us? For what else do they wear a uniform like King Humbert himself?

The long and short of it is," Carola said, "that Anita must give up that baby!"

The worst of it was that Carlos, Anita's brother, sided with Carola. He said he did not wish Anita to keep the baby. Unpleasant talk might go back to Italy, and break the heart of the respectable mother there. Anita also had no right to waste her earnings or to hurt her daily trade; he and she had come to New York for a purpose; they must do their duty, they must pile up the *lire* as fast as possible, and go home to raise that mortgage and to bless the eyes of the aged parents, who should have a roof of their own to die under. Besides, had Anita forgotten her promise to Pietro? As soon as she had helped to pay off the mortgage, and had earned her own little *dot*, was she not to be married and live near the aged mother in that house which Pietro was now way down in Alabama working to earn? Pietro might not wish to raise other people's children. And yet how could Anita abandon Teodoro Sandro, whose mother had left him with a prayer for his only inheritance?

So, mournful amid all the Christmas joy, poor Anita wandered into the cathedral and sat down in a high closed pew. The wax baby near the altar was no prettier than the living one held against her sad heart. How richly it was



dressed, and this poor wee thing sometimes wailed for cold! That Madonna in the good clothes seemed to have no eyes except for the wax baby in the gilt bed! Was it worth while to ask her to solve this terrible difficulty about Teodoro Sandro? She called softly several times, "Madonna! Please look at me!" but it was quite useless, she would not heed.

Then, desperate in her trouble, Anita knelt down in the pew and addressed herself, trembling at her own temerity, to the holy Jesus to whom her dear Maria had prayed.

"O Jesus, I know you are no longer a little baby; you are grown up now. I know you are not in this cold hard world; you are in glory. And yet I know you must remember when you were a small bambino, just like Teodoro; and you know what you needed then. You had a mother and Joseph to care for you; but Teodoro has nobody, and look how sweet and little he is! O Jesus, if you will please excuse me for coming straight to you, without a saint to help me, please show me what to do for this poor baby!"

Then Anita stood up. People went and came. She noted two, not Italians, a lady and a little girl, who had come to look on for a while. Anita followed them when they went out, and in the vestibule she held out her basket, saying, "Please, Signora!"

The lady looked at Anita's sweet sad face, then at her basket of pretty wares, then at the little bundle sleeping on her arm, and with a smile which seemed to Anita like heaven opening and letting some of the glory shine through, she took some little articles from the basket, and laying a silver dollar in their place said, "A happy Christmas to you, my dear," and so passed on.

Anita followed her, not hoping to sell more, but it seemed like comfort and companionship to be near such a kindly soul; the winter night grew warmer where she went. This mother with the child by her side seemed more sympathetic than that Madonna who would not turn her calm eyes to bestow one little bit of blessing on poor Maria's orphan son!

"Mamma!" cried the little girl, "I know just what I want for a Christmas present. Will you surely get it?"

"If possible."

"I want that pretty Gesù Bambino, from the church."

"Oh but that is impossible."

"I want it more than anything."

"Grace, darling, that bambino is kept there in the church, and year after year is brought out and shown at Christmas. I think it is to remind the people that the dear Lord was

once a baby. They would not see it, and you do not need it. You have nice dolls enough, my child."

"It is not a doll that I want. The bambino looks alive. It is not like other dolls. I want a wee little Gesù."

"Listen, my little girl; it is well for us all to learn some good noble lesson at Christmas-time. Here is one for you: the true Christ-child can be born in our hearts and live there, if we love him and our dear Heavenly Father and our fellow-creatures. If we are gentle, kind, tender, self-sacrificing, then we cherish the Christ-child in our hearts. If we are hard, cruel, selfish, unjust, then we crucify him in our hearts. So let us love and help those who need, for his sake!"

"Yes, mamma, that is a nice lesson—but," with a child's tireless persistence, "I want the dear baby Gesù for my present to-morrow."

"That is impossible, dear, as I just told you."

"I would be so sweet and kind to it," sighed the child. They entered their pleasant home.

Anita with her basket and Teodoro sat down on the steps. Through her ears droned the cathedral music, the little girl's words, the baby's wail. Before her tired eyes wavered the lights, the flowers, the clouds of incense,

the lady's smile, the gorgeous bambino in his gilded bed, the unhelpful Madonna.

Suddenly she rose and hurried back to the cathedral. She crept back into the tall dim pew where people on Saturdays waited to go to the confessional. She knelt, put the basket and the baby under the seat, and prayed fervently, mingling in her artless prayers the Christ in glory, the child-Christ in his bed, even the beautifully dressed Madonna!

It grew late, it was storming; the people went out, at last all were gone; the lights were turned low, all but those which blazed before the spectacle by the altar. The sacristan went away also, locking the great door after him.

And now Anita was alone. But she was not at all afraid. She drew near, Teodoro on her arm, to the altar, and the Madonna and the Bambino, even the very pictures on the wall, looked, she thought, kindly at her. She laid her apron on the floor and emptied into it the contents of her basket. Then she gently touched the Madonna's robe. "Madonna! if you can hear, though Maria told me that you could not, I beg you will not be angry with me if I borrow your Bambino's clothes for a little while. Forgive me for the sake of dear Maria, this bambino's mother, with whom your Son, the good Jesus, is well acquainted, for she prayed much to him

and has gone to live with him in heaven. As for the clothes, this bambino is only wax, and he will not know the difference, but Maria's baby is flesh and blood, and he cries when he suffers."

Then deftly Anita lifted the waxen infant from the manger, stripped off his splendid garments, put upon him with neatest care the swaddling clothes of Teodoro, and dressed that orphan baby in the rich vesture of the bambino.

The waxen bambino did not remonstrate. Anita fancied that now that the Madonna had been properly taken into confidence, she smiled consent. As for Teodoro, he was tired, the church was warm, he slept through it all.

Then Anita, who had been for a year at night-school, and was a wonder of wisdom in the Italian colony, took paper and a pencil from her basket and wrote, "This bambino is a Crismas gif for Signorina Grace. His father and mother have gone to heaven, the one where Evangelici go, and he is alone in the world. The kloes I borowd from the Gesù Bambino, in the Cathedral. I think his mother was willing, but he may wis them back."

She pinned this note on the breast of Teodoro and laid him snugly in the basket. Then she let herself out of a small side-door and fairly ran towards the home of her "gracious lady."

There was still a light burning there, late as it was ; they had been dressing the Christmas-tree for the child Grace. Then there was a minute's pause and a little struggle ; Teodoro was so dear, and he looked lovely in the borrowed array ! How could Anita give him up ? She kissed him with tears. But the Saviour his mother trusted would protect him, and she had done her best. " Good-by, Teodoro orphan ! Good-by, Anita's pretty bambino. Good-by ! Good-by ! "

She rang the bell. " Here is a present for the Christmas of the Signorina Grace," she said, and handing in the basket, went her way—crying.

Early next morning a gentleman waited on a priest of the cathedral with that poor little note and the garments of the waxen bambino.

" The little child," he said, " we will keep, for the sake of the Babe of Bethlehem."

Great was the consternation of sacristan and acolytes, altar-boys and choir-boys, when the beautiful bambino was discovered wrapped in the garments of his poor little brother in the flesh. But the old priest had a tender heart, and he rose nobly to the occasion. He held high the smiling waxen bambino. " My sons and daughters," he said with Italian fervor, " the Lord of glory when he was on earth did not

scorn to wear the garments of our humanity, to share a humble home, and wear the dress of the poor. Do not despise a little one because it is not dressed as your own little ones are dressed; but rather see in each one of them the face of the Christ-child, and love them well and train them well for the sake of Jesus who was once a child."

If any of old Carola's family guessed at what had been done, they said nothing. Anita's tears were dried. She had stolen near "that house" and seen Teodoro through the window, lying luxuriously in a lady's arms and vigorously pulling at a lovely bottle of milk.

As for the fine Madonna, she did not look at all angry since they had a secret between them; but after all Anita had found out that it was well to pray straight to the Lord Jesus who was once a child.

## CHAPTER XIV.

AFTER a little discussion of this story, and admiring examination of its dress of fine parchment with ivorine covers and white satin ribbons, the covers being beautified with cherubs, bambinos, snow-drops, Christmas roses, and other water-color ornaments, a gentleman, one of the Temperance delegates, said, "I also should like to contribute to this evening's entertainment. I have a story suited to the winter storm. A friend of mine who boards here has given me the proof of a story of his to read. He is a young editor and has gone home to spend Sabbath. He left me the story and I am sure would not object to my reading it to you. I was pleased with it for my part."

"Please read it to us," said Mrs. Nugent.

The gentleman went up stairs and presently returned with a roll of galley proof. The story was called

## BY THE WINTRY SEA.

Winter reigns most coldly by the sea. There is less of the warm mantle of snow; the sharp winds bind the earth in iron fetters; the sere,



long grasses, rigid with rime, keep up a shrill whistling, chording with the wild gusts and the moaning waters. On such a winter day, a man whose heart felt cold and hard as the December sat on a heap of wrack and looked gloomily at the tumble of lead-colored waves rolling slowly shoreward without a break of foam. The frozen sand gaped here and there in fissures set with needles of ice; blocks of ice, dragged by the tide from the creeks, lay with chains and ridges of shells and weeds frozen to their surface.

Along those desolate near dunes were only two dwellings; one was empty, roofless, its doors swinging and creaking; not far from this stood another small house, from the chimney of which a plume of blue smoke drifted slowly landward, while over it somehow brooded a darkness greater than that of the fading day, as if it rested under the heavy anger of God.

The man looked at these two dwellings with the wrathful glare of an angered wild beast; his hands clenched; his white teeth gnawed his bearded lips. For fifteen years he had brooded on revenge to be taken on his enemy—and now the time had come. Like Jonah he was ready to challenge God with the assertion that he did well to be angry. He had been deeply wronged: those dearest to him had been wronged. His father's unburied bones, perhaps even now

tossed by these waters, his mother's lonely grave, called for remembrance. He had been slandered when he was in the first defenceless inexperience of trusting, genial youth. Love had blossomed, to be smitten by the cruel hand of his adversary. But for *him* that empty, fireless, windowless house might have been a home, a paradise, where he cherished his parents' age, where his wife waited for him on the threshold and his babes smiled under his smile. What harvest of revenge would be too great to heap upon that enemy?

Yet Noll Bard sat there, not knowing how to wreak his rage—a rage that seemed so righteous.

From that dismantled home he had gone out beggared, robbed of good name, leading into exile a newly-widowed mother. He had left, in hopeless parting, a promised wife. Far from the sea, which his ancestors had loved as men love babes and wives, far from the simple homeworld, he had fled, a guiltless Cain, to the mines of the West. He had longed for the sound of the surf as one longs for the voice of his mother! He had panted for the salt air as one pants in a dungeon. What were the woods and the mountains and the dead level of prairies to him, the son of seafarers? His patient mother had lived and died in an exile cheered only by him.

He did not realize what he had been to her, how his filial love had compensated for loss, how his stalwart arm had comforted her who had trusted him.

For five of those fifteen years he had lived alone. "The Viking" the rest of the men had called him, "the frozen Viking," and then "the lucky Viking," for fortune had favored him—not too lavishly, but fairly well.

He sat there on the wrack, leaning on one hand, and just as hopelessly baffled by his enemy as on that shameful morning when he went out of that ruined home with his weeping mother. Oh cruel winter day that had made perpetual winter in his heart!

What to do for vengeance? Should he fly at his foe's throat with a knife, or put a revolver to his head? What would that be but to leave him to die in silence, with his lie unrecalled, and the blot left for ever on Noll Bard's name—all slanders justified by that homicidal act? Noll said to himself that he would take a fiendish joy in killing Tim Torry; that Tim's anguish would be to him a spring of delight; he would laugh to see Tim's house crumble to ashes, Tim's wife and children driven out naked and desolate. For Ann Torry also had had a mean and lying tongue, and were not the children of the same viper brood? But murder and arson would not be

measures to cleanse his own name or to restore the fallen honor of the Bards. Why were not men permitted the furious joy of wild beasts, to spring at each other's throats and tear a foe into pieces!

When Noll Bard had gone thus far in his ecstasy of rage, something more terrible than his former wrongs or his thirst after vengeance fell upon him—an awful poverty of soul—loss of hope, loss of faith. There had been a time when this man, so passion-tossed, had believed that he was a Christian! He had thought that the love of Christ had entered into his soul and cleansed the temple; and lo the Father's house was once more a den of thieves! Noll was not mighty in the Scriptures; he forgot that there was a second cleansing of the temple. Those long desolate years passed in the West under the shadow of a great wrong, beside that meek and holy mother, had—Noll once believed—borne fruit. There had been the daily example of a saint, the sweet communings of Sabbaths, and when those aged eyes were growing dim to earth, Noll, bowed above them, had avowed the faith of the Nazarene and promised forgiveness as the Christ forgave. He had a friend in that mining town: a queerly assorted pair they had seemed, the slim student minister and the big miner, born a sailor. That friend had once said to him words like mu-

sic ; it was when they had talked of Noll's troubles --

“ To him that overcometh  
A crown of joy shall be ;  
He with the Lord of glory  
Shall reign eternally.”

And Noll had thought that he had overcome and had cast out hate, and could leave his cause with God.

He had longed once more to look upon the place of his birth : he had thought to speak to no one there, for he had heard that his once promised wife had married another ; but he fancied that the sight of the home where his parents had lived would still further soften and subdue his heart.

Yet, just in proportion as he drew nearer that goal his heart had become harder and more bitter ; his wrongs had shaped themselves more rigidly, longing for revenge had become more furious than even in the first days of his pain ! As he sat there on the wrack he realized that in all this wrath there was nothing holy, nothing of the Christ : the old Adam was up in full force. Was he then mistaken ? had he never been a Christian ? had he no part in Jesus, and no hope of the immortal life ? What did that mean ? Had he not believed all that had been told him ? Had he not done all that they had bade him ?

If he had been deceived, then all was a deception. This religion was a myth of gracious gentle souls, such as his mother and the minister; but it was only a myth, and when tested by a strong man's need and passion it showed that it was only the stuff that dreams are made of! Faith? It was a fair fancy. This earthly life of wrath and pain was all there was of anything. A holy future? No; for there could be no such future without a strong and compassionate God; and if there were such a One, then Noll would have found help in this crucial hour. Had he not trusted and prayed? If he were left to himself it was because there was no Helper in the universe.

This man had had but a narrow range of spiritual experiences, and he did not understand that God deals as Cowper says:

“Yea more, with his own hand he seemed  
Intent to aggravate my woe,  
Crossed every fair design I schemed,  
Blasted my gourds and laid them low.

“‘Lord, why is this?’ I trembling cried;  
‘Wilt thou pursue my soul to death?’  
‘This is the way,’ the Lord replied,  
‘I answer prayers for grace and faith.’”

Noll Bard was of too robust common sense to believe in a religion of sentiment which did not bring forth fruits. If the works of the celes-

tial kingdom, the graces of the Christ, were in him, they would work out the peacable fruits of righteousness. Put to the proof he had no such fruits, he was full of the same intense hate as ever. Well, then, he was deceived, but it was because all was a deception. There had been nothing in it but a dream. His poor mother had rested upon a fiction. Where was she now? Where was his father, whom she had believed to be in heaven? Gone into utter nothingness: the Bible had stood as a witness for the love of Christ, the renewed spirit, the future crown; and one link of the chain being now broken, all was worthless.

The shock of this came upon him like a sudden intense chill, and hushed him into the quiescence not of peace, but of death. It was as if lava in an instant had become ice!

"One thing is sure," he whispered, "if it had been true I'd have been a different man. I'm not different, so it's all false."

Out of the tangle on the edge of the dune ran a little wretched dog, whining and crying, making sharp tracks on the thin covering of snow that lay above tide-mark. The creature trembled with cold. It cried and fawned at Noll's feet. The big Viking gazed remorselessly for a minute or two, then put out his great hand and gathered the dog within his fur-lined

coat. "Poor brute, get what comfort you can. If you belonged to the hateful human race, made up of scoundrels who lie and of fools who believe lies, you might freeze for all me. You are bony, puppy! Don't the rascally men feed you?" So he held the animal and relapsed into silence.

A few minutes sufficed to restore the little dog to warmth; he wriggled out of Noll Bard's clasp and slid away.

The dog ran back to a clump of snow-flecked grass and brush, and after a little barking and whining came forth again with a four-year-old child, bare-headed and bare-handed: from below the skirt and about the arms and shoulders of its faded calico dress appeared portions of red flannel underwear; coarse knit stockings wrinkled down over the broken shoes of the toddler, and tears lay on his red, wind-roughened cheeks. A shock-headed, unbeautiful child, yet with childhood's plea of helplessness and pitiful yearning for protection. Coming with the dog towards the man, the little forlornity stumbled on the frozen beach, and short sobs broke from his drooping lips. Noll looked grimly at this miserable specimen of the human race!

Then he reached forward, pulled the child to him, and remarked, "Just like their meanness,



turning a poor kid out to freeze," and so drew the baby into the fur-lined shelter where the dog had been, wiped with the flying ends of his neckerchief the wet, cold cheeks, and set himself to chafing the numb baby-hands. The dog, accepting change of shelter, crouched between Noll's knees.

Noll began to feel a rising interest in his stray's fate; he cuddled him on his lap, pulled off the ragged shoes and rubbed and squeezed the chilly feet, and then tied his big silk handkerchief over the youngster's head and neck.

But now day darkened rapidly into the winter twilight, and a light shone out in that house on the dune where long ago Praed Bell had lived. The child gave a rough, harsh cough.

"See here, shaver, you must go home. Where did you come from? Do you live up yonder? Does Praed Bell live there?"

The child punctuated each of these sentences with a nod. This then must be one of Praed's grandchildren. Noll rose, carrying the child wrapped in the fronts of his capacious overcoat. Truth was, this man's nature was essentially fatherly; he yearned towards all that was small and weak. That thirty thousand dollars dug out of the mines had not made him the happy man he would have been living on a hard-

earned five or six hundred a year shared by daughters and sons.

As he reached to knock at the weather-worn house-door, he said, "Kiddy, what's your name?"

"Tim Torry," spoke up the infant clearly; warmth and the home threshold had restored speech. "Tim Torry!" Had Noll been warming in his bosom his enemy's namesake son! O the little viper!

The door swung wide. Noll stood dumb. The strong light that revealed him with the child in his arms showed to Noll barren poverty: a table spread with corn-bread and water; a group of sad, homely, hungry children, and beyond this, in the next room, a woman evidently very ill, lying on a bed, while near her, on two chairs, lay white and stiff the body of a two-year old child. Oh the pity of it all!

Poverty, sickness, death, austere trio! They met him at his enemy's door and smote him into compassionate silence. With bowed head he crossed the sill and set little Tim on the hearthstone. No Tim senior was to be seen, and but for the child's name Noll would not have guessed that wan invalid to be the bold, noisy Ann Hopkins of fifteen years back. Ann, looking from her bed at the Viking, did not guess him to be Noll Bard; so soon, so utterly, do pain,

care, toil, and a few years obliterate our youth, our early selves !

The children in the room were a thin girl of fourteen who had evidently "wept till she had no more power to weep," a boy of eight and one of ten, and a girl of six years.

"O Timmy," said the elder girl, "where were you? We thought you were asleep! We were just looking for you!"

"Pretty care you take of him," growled Noll. "I found him by the water. If it had n't been for the dog he'd been frozen dead as—as—" he waved his hand towards the little rigid figure under the towel.

"What are you crying for? That one is better off out of the world than in it. This world's no kind of a place for kids, and it's a hideous place for grown-ups. Is that all you've got for supper?"—with wrathful scorn towards the table.

"It's all," said the girl, flushing. "We have all been sick. And Tom, the biggest boy, has a sprained ankle, and he can't get to the store; and Nickey was afraid to go, now it's dark and baby just dead. In the morning I'll go speak for a coffin, and get meat and potatoes. It's a mile to our nighest neighbor, and she's sick."

"What's your name?" asked Noll, to make assurance sure.

"Ann Hopkins 'Torry," responded the girl.

Hateful name! Noll's heart hardened again under the spell of the long-unheard syllables. And then—Tim gave another cough. The heart of the lately bereft sick mother stirred.

"Nan! little 'Tim is croupy!"

"I'd say he was," said Noll, who had seen a child die of croup.

"Nan," said the weak wailing voice, "soak his feet in hot water and rub his breast with lard! He needs a poultice and some medicine! Oh if I only could get up!"

"Don't try, mother; you fell over when you tried it a bit ago, and we could hardly get you back on the bed. I'll tend Tim."

Noll looked at the homely little fellow whose watery eyes and swollen face showed the violence of the cold he had taken. Name-child, son, likeness of his enemy! And yet the distressed little fellow tugged at his heart-strings! He softened, and was angry with himself for softening!

"Haven't you any—dad to look after you all?" he cried.

"Father's drowned! Swept overboard a month ago," said Nan, with such a burst of sobbing that the hot water she was pouring into a pan spilled over upon the puppy's tail, and the yelping creature fled to the refuge of Noll's feet.

Dead! Drowned! As he had left Noll's father to drown! Gone with his sins before the bar of God! Noll was one of those who hold a hearty belief in God's retributive justice—on their enemies. Now he found his hate, his zeal for vengeance, ebbing away. One enemy was drowned—the other, a shrivelled invalid, lay with her dead child within reach of her hand; and here were three forlorn children and a poor little chap in the grasp of the croup! They tore at his heart, especially that dead one with the unseen face. He strode up to the chairs, turned back the long, snowy towel. What a small, white, sweet face, over which seemed to lie a light and a smile as reflected from the new bliss of heaven!

Noll Bard stood vanquished—by Death and Sorrow.

"Hold on," he said in his full rich voice, "I'll go over to the village for medicine and a coffin and all the rest of it. I'll hurry; but you, Nan, do your level best for that kid, or he wont hold out till I get back. Do n't fret, I've got money enough, more 'n I know what to do with."

Had a thunderbolt fallen? All the children stood open-mouthed, gazing at a man who had money enough, more than enough!

Noll Bard went out into the dark. He no longer remembered his wrongs or his woes; he

did not even think how, over this road when he was blithe and young, after long hours of toil, he had sped to see Rose Denin in those dear old days. No ; only on, on, on, in haste.

He came back in a cart, with a doctor, a little coffin, and a strange assortment of purchases, made with a lavish hand. Noll's sympathies, the bonds of winter broken, had poured forth in a spring-time flood. The remainder of the night he sat with his enemy's namesake on his knees, fighting to save his life. Nan helped him faithfully, while the mother watched them with grateful eyes across the coffin where lay her youngest born.

Finally that shrill, ominous coughing ceased, little Tim's breath came freely, his heavy head sank back on Noll's arm, his little frame relaxed into the ease of slumber, the soft dew of perspiration gathered over his skin, as, held before the fire and gently rocked by Noll, he drifted deeper and deeper into rest.

Then Noll had time to think, and—he had a revelation. He saw himself on the wrack nursing hate, and orphaned of faith and love and hope and God—his test of all things, his own failure ; and yet here he sat, not doing the works of the old Adam, hating his enemy and avenging himself, but blessing those who had cursed him and doing good to those who had despite-

fully used him and persecuted him! Why, these were the works of the new man in Christ! Was it then true that he had been renewed of God's Spirit, helped by God's hand? Had his Lord flown to his relief at his call, and showed him how to cast off the unfruitful works of darkness and wear the armor of light?

It was true after all! There was a higher life to be lived, and he was living it! No more envying and strife, no more confusion and every evil work, but the love of God shed abroad in his heart through Jesus Christ his Lord! O joy of the redeemed who walk in white, victors over self and sin! What a flood of happiness poured through his soul and came softly from his lips, as his strong rich voice, subdued to the hour, sang a song of Zion heard in that mining-camp among the hills! To the sweet melody sleep came to weary Nan and mother, and Noll sang on, his enemy's family sleeping about him.

In the morning, as he still sat carefully holding the recovering Tim, the door was opened and a slender woman, wrapped in hood and cloak, crossed to Ann's bedside.

"Oh, you poor soul!" said the voice Noll knew so well, but now with sadder cadences than when they had laughed and sung together by the summer sea, "how you have suffered! I only just heard of it all, and I got up out of my

bed to come to you," and she bent and kissed Ann Torry.

Ann broke into a passion of weeping. "O Rose, you 've always been good and forbearing; but I do n't deserve it of you."

"Never mind, Ann. We were schoolmates, you know."

"Yes, but we've been cruel bad to you, him and me. It was along of us, Rose, that you lost your love and have lived alone."

"Not quite alone," said Rose, sweet and clear, "for the thought of Noll, my poor martyr, has always been with me."

Here the man who was nursing the sick child dropped a bottle on the hearth; men are such awkward creatures!

"Oh the hive syrup!" cried Nan; "it's all gone!"

"Not quite; here's a dose yet," said Noll, picking up the bottom of the bottle. "You, Nickey, here's five dollars. Run to the store and get hive syrup and oranges and toys and candy—all the truck you want, only hurry."

Nan looked reproof at this lunatic. "Do n't give him five dollars! Give him fifty cents; and, Nickey, if you go as fast as you can, you may buy a nickel's worth of candy."

Away went Nickey like the wind. But what are those women saying?



"You may well call him a martyr," sobs Ann. "It was because you chose him and refused Tim that poor Tim was mad and said what he did. It was all a lie."

"I know that. I never thought for a minute my Noll did it."

"And there was more back of it. Some way Noll Bard made sure that Tim passed his father's boat on the shoal and left him to drown. He did, for Tim was so mortal afraid of the shoals and the storm, he dare n't turn aside to save old Oliver. You see, Rose, a man that knows he a'n't fit is awful 'fraid to die! But after that Tim hated Noll and could n't bear to meet his look. And so he said it was Noll left Gomer Bell to perish on the Flute Rocks, and that Noll cut the holes in the fishing boats, so they could n't go after that big shoal of blue-fish. When Sam Slead, who did the whole of it, owned up, five years back, when he was dying, Tim would n't give in, and said Sam raved."

"But every one believed Sam, and felt sure that Noll had been innocent and was a martyr," cried Rose; "and I knew it always!"

"We've had our punishment," moaned Ann. "Never had any luck; the very sea seemed to hate us; we've been bitter poor, and had sickness, and lost two boats and our house, and had

to move out here ; and now Tim is drowned and the baby is dead ! Since Sam died you 're the only person, except strangers, ever crossed our doorway. And you 've lived alone all your days, though you 've had plenty of good offers."

"Good offers!" said Rose with scorn. "Whose offers would I take when I am Noll Bard's promised wife? And though we are parted in this world, I make sure we'll not be parted up in heaven. The Lord has kept my heart up."

Did Noll drop Tim or did Nan take him? Noll strode to the two women ; he laid his hand on Rose Denin's shoulder ; his voice was sweet as of old, deep with tremors of passion running through its chords. "We wont wait for heaven to meet, Rose. Do n't you know me, my dear?"

Rose Denin was thirty-three ; as he spoke her flower-fair face flushed into the lost bloom of her first youth. Her lover had been ruddy and smooth of face, a lad of twenty-two ; here was a bronzed and bearded man. But the eyes ! They were the true tender eyes of old, and his smile, leaping suddenly forth, was the smile that had won her heart when she was eighteen years old.

"The time has been long, Rose, but it is past, and here I stand, a rich man with a clean name, to make you my wife."

Oh simple little boast before his dear love and his enemy!

If ever there was a joy-crazy man, it was Noll Bard in those winter days. Winter! He thought that he lived in the tropics, and that the world was a-flush with summer!

The church was thronged for the wedding. As the crowd waited, a rough man passed up the aisle and at the altar turned.

Tim Torry! He spoke. "Neighbors, I'm here. I was picked up by a Bermuda-bound ship, and I got round here last night. I was close on to death, I tell you, and I vowed to God if ever he brought me home I'd stand here and tell the holy truth. I left old Oliver Bard to drown on the shoals. I was afeard to turn and take him off, and his face has haunted me ever since. When I was knocked overboard, 'peared like he floated alongside o' me, his gray hair playin' out on the sea."

"Oh-h-h!" through the thronged church.

"I hated to have young Noll round after that; he seemed so kind of accusin' like. I lied about young Noll. He never did it. Sam Slead told true—it was Sam that did it. But I said I'd cover him if he'd lay it on young Noll, and as I'd caught him at cutting the boats, why he agreed. You all believed us, and chased young Noll away, threatening to tar and feather him!

How ever were you took in so? the Bards had been a right sort, father and son! But out there in the waters, with death shriekin' in my ears, I vowed to God I'd confess if ever he brought me home."

"Ah-h-h!" through all the church, as they heard.

"Yes, he was innocent of it as a baby, but I was mad because Rose Denin liked him and not me. And he's come and heaped coals of fire on my head! He's fed and clothed my family and buried my baby, and bought Ann a decent house, and promised to school Amy like a lady, and to buy my boys a boat whenever they could handle her. Oh I tell you, neighbors, I feel them coals of fire burnin' plumb into my head! But it gives me courage too, for if Noll Bard is so forgivin' to an enemy, maybe the Lord too will have mercy on a black sinner like me."

Up rose the oldest deacon, wise and gray. "Brothers and sisters, it is written in the Book which is our guide that whoso confesses and forsakes his sin finds mercy, and also, 'Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.' Neighbors, we never know how far we ourselves might go, being tempted. God having borne so long with this man, and scared

him with the face of death, and permitted him to come home to confess, why, we surely can afford to cast nothing against him, if so be, from this out, he brings forth fruit meet for repentance."

There was a stir at the doorway, and through the central aisle Noll led his bride. Looking down on the sweet and happy face at his side, he beheld Rose fairer and dearer than on that summer day so long ago when she had promised to be his wife. The robins and the blue-birds had sung to them in that long ago; now the winds swept shrill across a wintry sea, but could not chill hearts where love had grown strong, nursed by a well-kept faith.

"I stay my haste, I make delays,  
For what avails this eager pace?  
I stand amid the eternal ways  
And what is mine shall know my face.

"What matter if I stand alone?  
I wait with joy the coming years;  
My heart shall reap where it has sown  
And garner up the fruit of tears."

## CHAPTER XV.

AT breakfast the next morning Mr. Brandt said that he thought their train would be able to start by noon. "A thaw is coming on," he said. "Meantime I have ordered a carriage, and am going out to buy any amount of Christmas presents for my family at Chicago. I wish Miss Catharine and Miss Myrtle would go with me and assist me in the purchases: and I want also to buy them each a ring, as a souvenir of our long trip together. We will meet you ladies on the sleeper at half-past eleven."

The girls set off in high delight, and Miss Lossing said to Mrs. Nugent, "I also have ordered a carriage. These poor dear little girls are not half dressed for such cold weather. I wish you would go with me in the carriage; Miss Matlack and the children are going, and we will finish up our trip at our car in the station. I am going to buy hats and cloaks and muffs and boots and leggins for the children."

When the party met at the station every one was loaded with parcels. The girls displayed in triumph, Catharine an opal ring, and Myrtle an emerald. The little girls were declared to be



*On a Snow-bound Train. Page 267.*





darlings, arrayed in brown Mother Hubbard cloaks, brown silk hoods with full ruches, brown leggins, new boots, and lovely little seal muffs. Every one was smiling and confident, and voluble descriptions of Mr. Brandt's purchases were given by Myrtle.

"I said," remarked Mr. Brandt to Mrs. Nugent, "when I first told you my story, that you would know nothing of me. I do not say that now. I shall tell my wife about you, and she and I will write you all about our family reunion. When we return to New York, we shall beg to continue this acquaintance. I hope it will grow into a strong friendship. You have been very helpful to me."

There were no more delays and hindrances.

At Chicago Mr. Brandt, who had telegraphed from Omaha to his son, was met by that son when the train arrived. Tears of joy and sympathy rose to Mrs. Nugent's eyes as she saw the strong, handsome, happy-faced young man clasp his father heartily in his arms. There was a great waving of handkerchiefs by the girls as the train moved off, leaving Mr. Brandt and his son on the platform.

At Cleveland there were further partings. Miss Matlack remained on the train, going to Buffalo and then to Troy, but assuring Miss Lossing that she would report at her home in

Philadelphia within three weeks. Catharine also remained on the train, going direct to Boston, but she and Myrtle had promised to write to each other, and Mrs. Nugent said to her, "I shall try and arrange for you to pass some of your vacations with me."

Mrs. Nugent and Miss Lossing, with Myrtle and the little orphans, remained at Cleveland to settle the affair of the custody of the children. As it was late in the afternoon, the party went to a hotel until morning.

"I am so afraid," said Miss Lossing to Mrs. Nugent, as with the children they next morning took a carriage to find the aunt, "that the friends will not be willing to let me have these little girls; and really I am becoming much attached to them. They seem to make a home and living possible to me once more."

"I feel pretty certain," said Mrs. Nugent, "that your offer will be accepted. You noticed that no one was at the train, and no word seemed to have been left with the people at the station about the children; yet the relatives had been written and telegraphed to."

The address of the aunt of these little girls had been written on a card sewed to the frock of Dora, the elder child, and the place was found to be on the second floor of a large tenement house.

"Come in!" cried a hasty voice, when the ladies knocked, and opening the door they found a tall, strong, respectable, and worn-looking woman ironing fine clothes at a large table. On one side of the table was a basket full of carefully rolled clothes ready for ironing; on a large frame hung other fine white wear.

"We came to bring you two little orphan nieces, who have been sent to you from Portland; here they are," said Mrs. Nugent, placing the little girls before their aunt.

"What! Them little ladies!" cried the laundress, eyeing the well-dressed pair. "They wont fit my poor place, sure! Why we heard their folks was terrible poor and left nothing, and they are dressed fine as fine! Well, some folks spends their all on clothes!"

"We thought as they were not met, and no word was left at the station, that perhaps you were not expecting them," said Mrs. Nugent.

"Oh I knew they were coming. Bad news travels fast; and I went to the dépôt twice, and I sent my oldest boy, Jim, three times. But Jim's got a place since yesterday, I'm thankful to say, for he needs it bad enough; and he could n't go to the cars any more, and no more could I, with all my work to do, I'm that hard put to it to keep a roof over our heads."

“Have you no husband to help you?” asked Mrs. Nugent.

“Yes, I have, and a good one too. The children are his nieces, not mine. They belonged to his sister. We had not seen her for ten years. My man broke his ankle, and he’s been in hospital nigh on to two months, and all the care of the family has been left on me. We have five of our own, and only two of them old enough to help, and they have got cash-boy places in a store. If we had n’t any girls, perhaps them two might come handy; but we’ve got three! I hadn’t told Jacob they were coming; I was afeared he’d worrit, and mebbe clean break down, with thinking of more on him, poor soul! When I heard about Eliza’s being dead, and the children coming here, I pretty near gave up. But Mis’ Murry, crost the hall, says to me, ‘Mis’ Blake, do n’t take on to fret; the Lord mebbe will find you a way out.’ She’s a powerful good woman, Mis’ Murry, but the Lord don’t seem to have found a way out yet.”

“Perhaps he has,” said Miss Lossing. “These children have travelled under my care for a week, and I am much attached to them. You spoke of their clothes; I dressed them in Omaha, because they were very poorly clad for this cold weather. I am willing to adopt them.”

“Eh?” said Mrs. Blake, “that’s queer. Folks

mostly don't take up with youngsters so easy like."

"I have lost all my family, and I am lonesome; I love children, and I have plenty of money to rear these children comfortably."

"Do you think your husband would be willing to give them up?" asked Mrs. Nugent.

"Jacob would leave it to me. I'm the one that would have to care for them, to wash and make and clean and cook and mend and be crowded. He'd do as I said. I'm clean discouraged at the idea of having more mouths to feed, but I want to do what's right; and I shouldn't want to give them where they'd not be well done by, or where folks would tire of them and shove them off after a bit."

"I would adopt them legally and keep them as my own," said Miss Lossing.

"So you say, mum, but I don't know anything about you. You look kind ladies both, but here's, as you may say, flesh and blood to be done for; and I'm at my wits' end!"

"Who is your pastor? do you go to any church? Your minister might know mine or some of my friends, and so help us out," said Miss Lossing.

"Well, I drop into church sometimes, now one and now another, when I don't feel too clean done out, of a Sunday evening, and when

I have a bonnet and shoes fit. But I don't know any ministers."

"There is a Society here for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children," said Mrs. Nugent. "Now Miss Lossing can see the secretary of the Philadelphia branch of that Society, and he can see what kind of a home the children have found and that they are legally adopted, and he can write to you and satisfy your mind. Miss Lossing will give you her address. You had really better let the children go; it is an excellent offer."

"It is n't that I want to keep them," said the woman bluntly, "for I don't—I'm too thronged—I don't know where I'd put them. There's seven of us now, for three rooms; and me doing laundry work! But I want to do what's fair and right, their mother being dead."

"I know you do," said Mrs. Nugent, "and you will be fully satisfied that you have done right if you let them go. You shall hear from the Society, or from any person in Philadelphia, minister or city officer, that you may name."

The woman had stood looking dubiously from the ladies to the children. She had not kissed the little ones, nor even shaken hands with them; she regarded them with troubled, anxious eyes.

"I wish Mis' Murry was to home to counsel

with," she sighed. Then suddenly she said, "Wait a minute!" took Dora, the elder child, by the hand, led her into the next room and closed the door. In about ten minutes she returned, saying, "It is all right; you may have the children; and I'm thankful to have them taken care of. You send on the letters you spoke about, so Jacob will know we did our best."

She looked greatly relieved, kissed the children good-by, and with a "Thank you, ladies," seemed anxious to get back to her ironing.

When they had returned to the hotel Miss Lossing said to Mrs. Nugent, "I am so glad she gave up the children! Evidently she did n't care a pin for the poor things. I do n't see how folks can be so hard-hearted!"

"I did not read our poor working-sister in that way," said Mrs. Nugent. "I think she really was conscientious and wanted to do what was right. If no place had been opened for the children I think they would have shared fairly with her own children. She would have been sharp and hard, but not cruel to any of them. I saw in her a woman burdened with overwork, hemmed in by pressing needs, really unable to see where additional food, clothes, and shelter would come from. You could not expect her in her hard, narrow, careful life to have much tenderness or emotion to spare for two

children whom she had never seen—children of a sister-in-law whom she had not seen for ten years.”

Then looking at the intelligent, thoughtful-faced Dora, Mrs. Nugent said to her, “Come here, my dear. When your aunt took you in that other room, what did she do?”

“She took me in her lap and said she wanted to do what was right by us, and that we should n’t come to any harm. She said we could stay with her if we wanted to, and she’d do her best, but it would n’t be very much of a best. She asked if we wanted to go with the lady, and I said yes.”

“What then?”

“She asked if we had been with the lady for about a week, and if she had been good and kind and spoken nice to us, and what had she done for us. I told her she got us the clothes, and was kind to us just like mother, and washed and dressed us every morning, and curled our hair and told us stories, and at night she undressed us and put us to bed, and she fixed our eating for us and was careful what we had. Then she asked if the lady put us to bed herself, and I said yes. And she asked did she have us say our prayers, and I said yes, she told us our prayers and kissed us good-night like mother. Then she said, ‘All right, you can go with the lady.’”



"There you see," said Mrs. Nugent to Miss Lossing, "the poor soul was doing her best. When she heard of the night-prayer and the kiss, that settled it; she has the woman-heart in her, the mother-heart, under all her hard exterior."

Miss Lossing wiped away a tear or two, and turning to the table wrote a note. When it was finished she handed it to Mrs. Nugent, who read:

"MRS. BLAKE:—I feel very grateful to you for giving me the two little girls to cheer my lonely life. I shall be sure to let you hear from them now and then. After I left you I felt as if I would like to do something to help you in your heavy cares, while your husband is sick. Will you accept as if from your little nieces the twenty-dollar bill which I enclose?

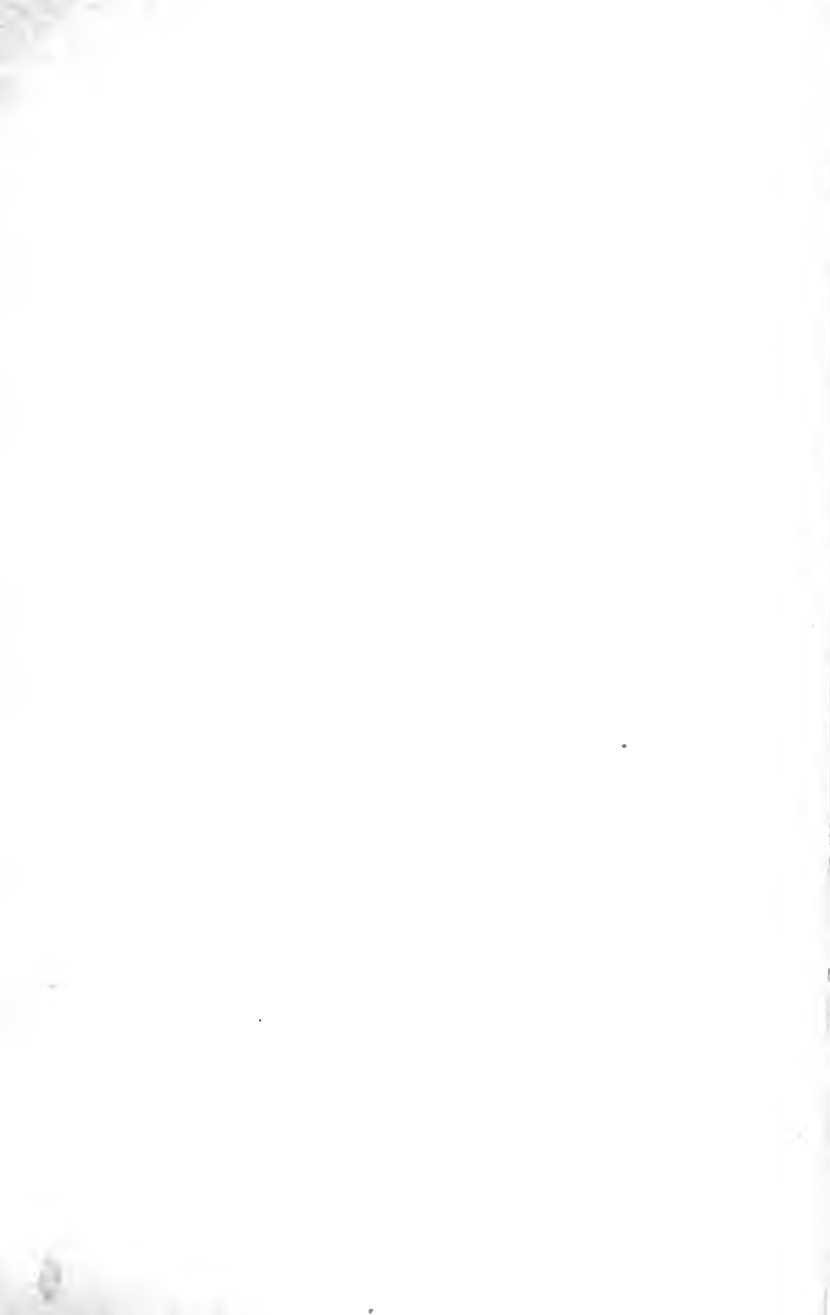
"ELIZABETH P. LOSSING."

"Now," said Miss Lossing, folding the bill in the letter, "let Myrtle go this time. I will order a carriage for her, and she can take the letter to Mrs. Blake. Also, as the poor soul has three small girls, Myrtle can take to her that portmanteau of the children's clothes; they will not need them any more, and they may be useful to their little Blake cousins. Dora says the frocks she and Nellie are wearing were

made by their mother, her last work for them. I am going to keep them always for them, to help them to remember the one who loved them best in this world."

The next morning our travellers again set forth on their journey, and this time there were no delays until they reached New York. Mr. Nugent met his mother and ward; and Miss Lossing and her little girls, bidding them good-bye, with many promises of letters and visits, proceeded on their way towards Philadelphia.

The long journey from West to East was ended.







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